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SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Humanitarian assistance has been subjected to profound and dramatic change in recent years. An unprecedented number of people are caught in, and made vulnerable by, disasters and violent upheaval which kill, maim and displace and destroy vital means of survival.

2. In man-made disasters, humanitarian organizations are compelled to operate in war-torn societies where conflicting parties are often openly contemptuous of fundamental humanitarian norms. A major challenge for these organizations is safeguarding the well-being of civilians and the provision of assistance in a manner consistent with humanitarian principles.

3. In addition, the international community is faced with the paradox of needing ever larger resources to address the immediate survival needs of victims while simultaneously recognizing that such action may deflect attention and support from initiatives essential to undoing the root causes of vulnerability and strife. Faced with these conflicting trends, humanitarian organizations have been reassessing the processes that shape the nature and impact of their interventions.

4. The onslaught of sudden crises, new challenges and competing needs have repeatedly highlighted the importance of a well-organized and adequately resourced mechanism for coordination, both within the multi-actor humanitarian arena and with other elements of the international system involved in crisis management and preemptive action. This is particularly evident in rapid and simultaneous mass population movements. It is often difficult to mobilize and deploy resources quickly in a manner which will prevent avoidable deaths. However, notwithstanding the importance of support from the international community, it is the people of the country directly affected who are primarily responsible for their own recovery and that of their communities.

5. Some vital progress has been made both in responding to the needs of victims and in generating a more cohesive approach within the United Nations system. However, as outlined in the present report, there are continuing areas of concern which weaken and impede the work of humanitarian organizations. The report opens with an examination of the volatile context within which the bulk of humanitarian assistance is being provided today. It examines the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to emergencies and reviews issues which affect recovery programmes. Recent activities in prevention and preparedness, especially with reference to natural disasters, are also highlighted. It should be noted that an extensive examination of natural disasters and disaster reduction activity will be the exclusive focus of a separate report to the Economic and Social Council in July 1995 on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Finally, the present report concludes with recommendations for the consideration of Member States.

II. THE VOLATILE CONTEXT OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

6. The volatile context within which humanitarian assistance is provided is a major determinant in the overall capacity of the United Nations system to preempt and respond to crises in a manner which minimizes avoidable suffering. The formal organization of humanitarian assistance, and the principles that have been codified in refugee and international humanitarian law, reflect a belief that individuals have rights that are implicit in our shared humanity. In struggling to render these rights meaningful, the international community has saved countless lives and enabled numerous survivors to commence the difficult process of rebuilding their lives and their societies.

7. However, while there is a greater understanding of the processes through which needs are identified, and much worthwhile action has been taken to improve the response capacity of the United Nations system, there are, none the less, major challenges which need to be addressed in the dramatically changed climate of the post-cold-war era.

8. The growth in the frequency and brutality of internal conflict is one of the defining features of the 1990s. The reality of contemporary warfare is self-evident. Victims are primarily civilians. They represent more than 90 per cent of casualties in most of the recent conflicts. Women and children bear the brunt of the fighting and are, invariably, a majority of those seeking refuge either as refugees or as internally displaced persons. In addition to physical abuse and deprivation, the victims of violence are often severely traumatized. Women must often contend with rape and sexual abuse and must assume sole responsibility for the safety of their families. Children are particularly vulnerable to violence and many are forcibly recruited into combat. People who are trapped in war zones, or who are unable or unwilling to flee, face major problems which have not yet been adequately dealt with by the international community. The absence of the protection and assistance which is generally available for refugees adds to the dangers faced by internally displaced persons and war-affected groups. In some situations, people in flight from the horrors of war are obliged to cross an international border in order to receive assistance from humanitarian agencies.

9. The violence of modern warfare is compounded by the increase in the number of people affected. In 1960 there were 1.4 million refugees around the world. By 1985, that figure had risen to 11.6 million and it had risen substantially again to 18.2 million by 1992. Currently, there are some 25 to 30 million people who are internally displaced and in need of assistance from the international community. In addition, there are many other war-affected civilians, as well as individuals who suffer tremendously in natural disasters.

10. The phenomenal increase in the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is directly related to the growing number of crises that erupt in violent conflict. In 1959, 10 wars were raging, while some 50 conflicts scar the international landscape in 1995. The bulk of these wars are within States, a fact which has major implications for ensuring compliance with humanitarian law.

11. The scale and depth of suffering in conflict situations confronting the international community today is too often a consequence of a disregard for fundamental humanitarian norms. In many instances, the suffering endured by civilians is not an incidental element of political and military strategies but constitutes its major objective. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda are alarming examples of what occurs when civilians are subjected to the full brutality of contemporary warfare and gross violations of human rights. Determination must be shown to enforce the rule of law and to hold accountable those who are responsible for heinous crimes. The establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute alleged perpetrators of genocide and crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda is a significant development which signals an end to a culture of impunity. The inclusion of rape as a war crime is equally significant and demonstrates an unwillingness to ignore abuse that specifically targets women and girls. Taking action that will advance the cause of justice in these conflicts will also act as a deterrent to gross violations of human rights in other volatile situations.

12. Action on human rights may also assist in resolving crises, or at least facilitate the development of an environment conducive to the homeward return of uprooted people. It is within this context that funds from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund were made available to accelerate and support activities undertaken by the Centre for Human Rights in Rwanda. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other relief organizations also offered logistical and other support. Human rights and related action is of critical importance to the effectiveness of humanitarian programmes.

13. Disregard for humanitarian norms has major implications for the overall impact and effectiveness of humanitarian action and the well-being of those it is intended to support. The situation in the former Yugoslavia is but one example of the way in which humanitarian activity is restricted and supplies are diverted and abused to achieve objectives that are diametrically opposed to those of humanitarians. In other conflict settings, such as Liberia, access to humanitarian assistance as an urgent and inalienable right has been disrupted and denied for the express purpose of achieving political objectives.

14. The limited means of humanitarian organizations to provide protection is particularly glaring in conflict settings and in situations characterized by gross violations of human rights. The Rwandan experience illustrates the way in which the capacity of the United Nations to provide protection and assistance is undermined when inputs and distribution mechanisms are used for purposes that are inimical to humanitarian objectives. Finding the means to reach those in need without entrenching the power of abusive elements is one of the most difficult challenges facing the humanitarian community in recent times.

15. Disrespect for humanitarian norms also often implies added risk for relief workers. As the number of conflicts increases so too does the number of practitioners who have been wounded and killed, sometimes deliberately, while carrying out their humanitarian tasks (see annex I). Left unchecked, this pattern is likely to have a negative impact on the capacity of organizations to protect and provide assistance to disaster victims. Disruption and diversion of relief supplies has seen the emergence of "negotiated access" as a widely used

tool, notwithstanding its potential ramifications. Dependence on the agreement of armed groups often makes the provision of humanitarian assistance tenuous and subject to unacceptable and dangerous conditions. Significantly, such "negotiated presence" often serves to undermine the protection capacity of organizations involved in humanitarian activities. Safeguarding the concept and reality of "humanitarian space" when the needs of war-affected groups are deemed secondary to political and military priorities is one of the most significant challenges currently confronting the humanitarian community.

16. The major obstacle facing humanitarian organizations is the absence of sufficient political will and support for action to address the underlying causes of crises. The provision of humanitarian assistance in a vacuum is tantamount to managing only the symptoms of a crisis. Experience shows that, in most instances, the effectiveness of humanitarian endeavours in conflict settings is largely predicated on successful action by the international community to resolve the problems that provoked the crisis.

17. In some situations, such as Angola and Mozambique, a determined effort has been made to stop the fighting and to consolidate the peace. In other settings, such as Haiti, assertive action has been taken to end oppression and the potential for violent conflict. This is in dramatic contrast to other settings, such as the Sudan where conflict has smouldered for 28 of the last 39 years. In Burundi and Liberia, a volatile mix of circumstances points to the need for action to strengthen the push for peace.

18. Liberia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia illustrate how the work of humanitarian organizations is severely constrained in the absence of measures focused on resolving the underlying causes of crises. In sum, it is critically important that the international community acknowledges the vital but limited role of humanitarian action in complex crises. It is equally important to ensure that humanitarian programmes are not used as a substitute for action needed to reverse the dynamics of war and the circumstances which led to armed conflict.

19. The humanitarian agenda is often shaped by political attitudes to particular crises, strategic interests in specific areas and the attention span of the media. Such factors, which are for the most part beyond the control of humanitarian organizations, play an important role in the low level of attention and support provided to victims of "silent" emergencies. Ideally, and in a more humane world, assistance would be provided according to need and the core principle of impartiality would have greater relevance when responding to emergencies.

20. Action taken by the international community to end oppression or bring about change by non-military means can have major ramifications for those who are already victimized by inequitable political and economic structures. Economic sanctions hit the poor hardest and can have a deleterious impact on the work of humanitarian organizations. As outlined in the position paper of the Secretary-General entitled "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace" (A/50/60-S/1995/1), there is a need for prior assessment of the likely impact of sanctions and how these affect humanitarian considerations.

21. The scourge of land-mines is yet another major concern. The reality of this insidious weapon demands greater accountability and more accelerated action to curtail its use. Land-mines are both a cause of suffering and an obstacle to its alleviation. Mines kill some 800 people every month, maim thousands and are a major hazard for impoverished rural dwellers uprooted by war. For many people unable to cultivate land or to return home, the presence of land-mines precludes meaningful peace long after wars have officially ceased. An international meeting on mine clearance, to be held in July 1995, is being organized to heighten awareness regarding issues of uncleared mines and the coordination of assistance in mine clearance. However, de-mining by itself is not a satisfactory solution. The solution is a total ban on all forms of land-mines and the components to make them.

22. Other factors which have an impact on the effectiveness of relief and protection organizations include the relationship between the level of resources and attention devoted to the prevention of, preparedness for and recovery from disasters, and the amount of resources required to meet the daily needs of people in camp situations. Rwanda is but one example of current trends. Some US$ 1 billion was spent in the first six months of the crisis. The bulk of this was used for the immediate survival needs of the millions who were uprooted and displaced in 1994. Although resources were requested at an early stage for confidence-building measures to facilitate and encourage the return of those who had fled, and for action focused on the problem of genocide, only a minuscule amount has been made available for activities that are essential to ameliorating and resolving the underlying causes of the cyclical strife which now characterizes Rwanda and other parts of the Great Lakes region.

23. In more general terms, refugee spending doubled between 1990 and 1992. The cost of peace operations increased 5-fold in the same period and 10-fold in 1994. Between 1989 and 1994, the amount of resources used for humanitarian programmes has tripled from $845 million to some $3 billion. The implications of these figures cannot be ignored, particularly given the diminishing amount of resources available to strengthen indigenous capacity and to reduce vulnerability to crises.

24. There are obvious limitations to the capacity of humanitarian organizations to assist people whose usual means of coping has been violently disrupted or destroyed. Human insecurity and marginalization fed by oppression, deprivation, abuse of fundamental rights, social and economic imbalances, or a combination of these, are common features of the many crisis situations now confronting the international community. The need to tackle the root causes of suffering and vulnerability is more acute than ever.

III. THE CHALLENGE OF COORDINATION

25. Much attention has been devoted in recent years to improving the overall coordination of the multi-actor humanitarian relief system. Member States, the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations continue exploration of the most effective methods of cooperation and coordination among themselves and with indigenous authorities and communities. Lessons from past experience have helped to identify and develop

specific coordination mechanisms and tools to facilitate response to emergencies. This section examines some of those mechanisms, identifies recent developments and notes areas of outstanding concern.

A. Department of Humanitarian Affairs

26. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is the entity within the United Nations charged with ensuring the effective coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance, and with promoting actions to prevent, or at least mitigate, the effects of natural and man-made disasters. Within this larger context, the Department has focused its efforts on five areas during the past year and will continue to do so in the coming year.

27. A major focus for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is the advancement of humanitarian concerns. It is actively aware of the need to ensure respect for the impartiality and neutrality of humanitarian action and is a strong advocate of strengthening compliance with humanitarian law.

28. A second theme is the ongoing refinement of the main tools provided to the Department to promote coordination: the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the consolidated appeals process.

29. The third focus is the broadening and strengthening of the involvement of all relevant entities in emergency coordination activities. For example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the representative of the Secretary-General for internally displaced persons are now invited to attend Inter-Agency Standing Committee meetings on items of concern to them. A "framework for coordination" between the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the Departments of Political Affairs and of Peace-Keeping Operations has been initiated. This process strengthens cooperation in the analysis of early warning information and the planning of preventive action, as well as fact finding and operations planning during a crisis. In Rwanda, NGOs have formed part of the United Nations coordination structure. NGOs also participated in several consolidated appeals. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is working with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator to strengthen further the capacity of that Office for quick action.

30. The fourth theme is the strengthening of support for in-country coordination. With respect to natural disasters, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has strengthened stand-by capacities through the further development of United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams and the military and civil defence assets project. With respect to complex emergencies, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee agreed in 1994 on the terms of reference for humanitarian coordinators and the process and circumstances under which they would be appointed. The restructured Department includes a Rapid Response Unit, which has strengthened stand-by mechanisms to provide staff in the field with the necessary support for the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

31. The fifth focus is the promotion of system-wide improvements by acting upon lessons learned from humanitarian experience and the identification of new opportunities. Early warning systems, de-mining and disaster management

training are areas in which the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is taking a lead to add value to the United Nations humanitarian system. Recognizing the opportunities inherent in the new information technologies, the Department has been working closely with the United Nations organizations concerned, NGOs and Governments to develop ReliefNet, an international information sharing system focused on humanitarian needs and responses.

32. In addition to these five programmatic themes, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs continues to engage in continuous efforts to improve its internal functioning. In 1994, the Department addressed its most pressing internal concerns with a reorganization, creating a unified desk officer structure in New York as the core of a new Complex Emergency Division. Among other changes was the consolidation of the Mitigation Branch and the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction into one division dealing with natural disaster reduction. In 1995, the Department initiated a strategic planning process which will be followed by a management study to identify the core resources required by the Department to discharge its mandate, as well as ways and means to enhance its effectiveness.

33. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has steadily progressed in achieving greater effectiveness. One major impediment, however, is the funding pattern it inherited at its inception. Only a third of the staff of the Department are funded from the regular budget and since the beginning efforts have been made to establish more regular-budget posts. Efforts to elaborate a financial strategy to put the funding of the Department on a viable and sustainable basis will continue.

B. Inter-Agency Standing Committee

34. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is a unique forum in that its membership brings together the United Nations organizations directly involved in humanitarian response activities and also extends participation beyond the United Nations to include NGOs and other international organizations. The Committee therefore has the potential to provide collective leadership and to articulate principles and policy on strategic issues geared to enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian operations.

35. In 1994, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee agreed on a set of guidelines relating to the humanitarian mandate and to the appointment of and terms of reference for humanitarian coordinators. The Committee also designated the Emergency Relief Coordinator as the reference point for matters concerning internally displaced persons and established a task force to develop recommendations regarding them. In 1995, the Committee will continue to examine policies and general implications with respect to the humanitarian impact of sanctions, de-mining and internally displaced persons. It will also examine and adopt an inter-agency approach to the utilization of military and civil defence assets for humanitarian assistance and pursue increased operational coordination and cooperation in emergency telecommunications.

36. Members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee recognize the need for it to focus on key policy issues which require discussion and action at the executive

level. The working group of the Committee is designed to address operational issues and to manage the work of task forces established to address specific topics. The adoption by the Committee in 1994 of a set of action-oriented procedures should facilitate the tasks of the working group in discharging its supportive and managerial functions. The full potential of the Committee has yet to be realized. This will require the collective commitment of all its members and the leadership of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to make it a reality.

C. Central Emergency Revolving Fund

37. The usefulness of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund in facilitating a timely response to emergencies is well-recognized by the United Nations operational organizations. Details of advances made to and reimbursements received from operational organizations and on the status of the Fund are given in annex II. The Fund has served as a predominant source of funding for United Nations organizations in the critical initial phase of emergencies to supplement their own emergency funding capacity. Despite these very encouraging results, however, the level of resources of the Fund and certain constraints in its utilization need to be addressed to ensure its continued effectiveness.

38. These concerns were acknowledged by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/139 A of 20 December 1994, where the Assembly noted the need to increase the resources available in the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the need to ensure that the Fund is maintained at an adequate level to respond to new emergencies at any time. The Assembly invited potential donors to make additional contributions to the Fund and, in that context, requested the Secretary-General to explore the feasibility of seeking in-kind donations.

39. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has undertaken extensive consultations with its humanitarian partners and with both the traditional and non-traditional donor community in order to increase financial support for and broaden the donor base of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. The current status of contributions made to the Fund is shown in annex II.

40. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, in cooperation with its United Nations humanitarian partners, has reviewed the implications of in-kind contributions as a possible additional resource for the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. The general consensus among operational organizations is that in-kind contributions would be neither practical nor consistent with the envisaged use and revolving nature of the Fund. Concern was also expressed about management and overhead costs associated with in-kind contributions. Furthermore, certain humanitarian supplies, such as agricultural seeds and medicines, must conform to strict technical specifications of recipient organizations. Questions have been raised concerning the mechanism for accounting and reimbursement of in-kind contributions, in the light of the revolving nature of the Fund. It is generally agreed, however, that in-kind contributions are useful in the context of overall emergency response and therefore should be encouraged as direct bilateral contributions to the organizations concerned.

41. The need for timely replenishment of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund cannot be overemphasized. Delayed reimbursements could have a serious impact on the Fund's ability to meet requirements in emergency situations. In efforts to ensure the timely recovery of advances, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has taken steps to strengthen existing procedures, shortening the period for reimbursement, encouraging partial repayment whenever possible and drawing the attention of donors in consolidated appeals to prior utilization of the Fund. Despite such initiatives, however, a number of advances have remained outstanding for more than a year owing to weak responses to certain consolidated appeals. These include advances drawn by the World Food Programme (WFP) for Tajikistan ($2,463,879), by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) for Lebanon ($3,306,724) and by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for Zaire ($350,153).

42. In such cases, measures were taken to restore the balance of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, in accordance with the provisions of the guidelines 1/ governing its operation, paragraph 16 of which states, inter alia, that the Emergency Relief Coordinator may:

(a) Utilize such balances of the Fund, including accumulated interest, as may exceed the target level of $50 million;

(b) Appeal to donors to make specific contributions to the Fund to cover the amounts advanced;

(c) Require the operational organization to repay the balance of the advance from its own resources.

43. Given that the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, interest included, remained at a level only slightly above the minimum $50 million level, and therefore could not be utilized for absorbing the outstanding advances, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs requested the organizations concerned to consider reimbursing the Fund from their own resources. The organizations responded that, in the absence of donor contributions, they were not in a position to repay the Fund from their own resources. Under the circumstances, the only remaining alternative is to seek the support of donor Governments to make specific contributions to cover the outstanding advances so that the level of resources of the Fund can be maintained at the minimum level of $50 million as stipulated by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991.

44. On occasion, United Nations organizations have requested Central Emergency Revolving Fund resources for ongoing emergency programmes in order to avoid serious interruption or scaling down of much needed humanitarian relief activities. While these demands go beyond the envisaged scope of the Fund, the judicious use of the Fund for such purposes has proved to be necessary under exceptional circumstances. It has, however, been pointed out that the Fund was established primarily to ensure a timely response in the initial phase of an emergency. The General Assembly may wish therefore to authorize the use of the Fund, in compelling circumstances, for meeting critical humanitarian requirements of protracted emergencies.

D. Support for in-country coordination

45. In recent years, as the number of major complex emergencies has increased, so too has the United Nations been increasingly called upon to play an active coordination role in such circumstances. In the case of Somalia, the Security Council, in its resolution 733 (1992) of 23 January 1992, requested the Secretary-General to appoint a humanitarian coordinator. Subsequently, the size and complexity of the crises in Angola and Mozambique led to similar appointments by the Emergency Relief Coordinator on behalf of the Secretary-General after consultations with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

46. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has recognized that a more systematic approach is needed for the selection and appointment of humanitarian coordinators in special circumstances. This led in 1994 to the approval by the Committee of specific terms of reference for such coordinators, their desired profile and the procedure for their appointment, as well as the creation of a stand-by roster of qualified potential coordinators. The terms of reference also apply to resident coordinators when they serve as the coordinator for humanitarian assistance. These steps were designed to ensure the provision in larger complex emergency situations of coordinators who have the special experience and skills needed for such work and for them to be able to focus their full attention on the tasks involved.

47. While this mechanism is still relatively new, it is possible to make some general observations on its use to date. The mechanism is being used, as appropriate, in support of and as a complement to the United Nations resident coordinator system. As at May 1995, a total of five humanitarian coordinators had been appointed; in Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, Rwanda and Somalia. Thus, for the majority of emergencies, United Nations in-country coordination is undertaken by the United Nations resident coordinator, under the direct supervision of the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

48. The humanitarian coordinator post is meant to be temporary, reflecting the large scale and acuteness of the emergency in question. As the relief phase of the complex emergency recedes and the focus of humanitarian efforts shifts towards rehabilitation and recovery, the remaining functions of the humanitarian coordinator are phased over to the traditional United Nations coordination mechanisms. For conflict situations, one important indicator for the need for such a transition has been the creation and initial implementation of a formal peace process.

49. Thus, for example, in Somalia the humanitarian coordinator is now also the same person as the United Nations resident coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative. In Mozambique, the post of humanitarian coordinator has been phased out, and the United Nations resident coordinator also serves as the coordinator for humanitarian assistance.

50. Humanitarian coordinators work closely with national Governments regarding humanitarian assistance matters. While in exceptional cases such national Governments may not exist, such as Somalia or in the initial period of the Rwanda crisis in 1994, this remains the exception. Humanitarian coordinators, like resident coordinators, are committed to supporting the capacity of

Governments to take responsibility for their countries' own recovery. In Rwanda, the humanitarian coordinator has set up an integrated structure with the Ministry of Rehabilitation. This structure, staffed by United Nations, NGO and government officials, is responsible for ensuring the daily coordination of relief activities as well as encouraging recovery programmes.

51. Lastly, the process of designating humanitarian coordinators has allowed the Emergency Relief Coordinator to tap effectively the broader pool of talent among the various United Nations organizations. Thus, humanitarian coordinators have been appointed from among the staff of UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

52. The complexity of recent crises has highlighted the need to initiate or implement key coordination and planning actions at the very onset of a complex emergency. The United Nations resident coordinator is tasked with the immediate response to an emergency, but the scope or complexity of emergency activities may necessitate the strengthening of in-country coordination capacity. In the light of past experience, most United Nations operational organizations have tried to build up their rapid response capacity in their appropriate sectoral area in order to facilitate the emergency response (see sect. IV below).

53. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has developed rapid response facilities for both natural and man-made disasters which aim to support the immediate in-country emergency coordination efforts of national authorities and the United Nations resident representative as they confront the demands of emergency response.

54. United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams were created specifically for natural disasters. These teams consist of emergency management experts who can be deployed within hours of a disaster to work with local authorities. The teams aim to facilitate a coordinated and effective response to natural and environmental disasters. They can assist local authorities with coordination, provide for immediate assessment of damage and humanitarian relief needs, facilitate access by national Governments to international stand-by resources and promote exchange of know-how and techniques.

55. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is strengthening regional and national capacities to manage disaster response by increasing the number of countries participating in the system of disaster assessment and coordination teams. It has also established a Latin American team staffed by local personnel familiar with local conditions. Steps were also taken in 1994 to reinforce the readiness of such teams through training and increasing the number of team members available. Missions by such teams in 1994 assisted in the assessment and coordination of appropriate relief responses following torrential rainstorms in China, floods in Egypt and Djibouti, tropical storms in Haiti and in preparation for a cyclone in Bangladesh.

56. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs also continues work with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, which was initiated to benefit from experience in dealing with major disasters involving collapsed structures. Today, the Advisory Group, through its International Steering Group, regional groups and working groups, addresses a wide range of international cooperation

issues in the mobilization, dispatch and coordination of international relief resources in sudden-onset disasters.

57. With respect to complex or man-made emergencies, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has established a Rapid Response Unit to deploy experienced personnel to work with the United Nations resident coordinator or the humanitarian coordinator so as to ensure immediate coordination and to build systematic support for coordination activities as the emergency evolves. The Department has deployed its rapid response capacity repeatedly. In Kigali in April 1994, the advance humanitarian team, staffed with Department of Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations organization representatives, re-established a United Nations humanitarian presence during a very difficult period and was able to lay the groundwork for the expansion of humanitarian activities as the situation permitted. In Haiti, a combined Department of Humanitarian Affairs/UNDP team was deployed to support the United Nations coordinator for humanitarian assistance in the immediate aftermath of United Nations action in September 1994. The team focused on providing increased information services, liaising with NGOs and bilateral/United Nations Mission in Haiti military forces and preparing the humanitarian strategy and the consolidated appeal for Haiti. During the crisis in Chechnya, Russian Federation, the Department worked closely with UNHCR, focusing on facilitating the establishment of operating procedures and assisting in the start-up of humanitarian assistance deliveries by WFP and UNICEF.

58. In order to ensure the provision of immediate and effective support for in-country coordination, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has expanded its cooperative arrangements with the Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils and with the Swedish Rescue Services Agency to utilize their capacities on a stand-by basis for supporting field coordination in complex emergencies.

E. Consolidated appeals process

59. In 1994, 14 consolidated inter-agency humanitarian assistance appeals were launched, reflecting the needs of 15 countries and covering a population of 39.5 million. Of the $2.76 billion requested, $2.13 billion was pledged to the organizations participating in the appeals. Although at the aggregate level contributions equalled 77 per cent of requirements, the rate of response varied from 14.8 per cent for the appeal for Yemen to 105 per cent for the appeal for the former Yugoslavia. Although the number of appeals declined from 21 in 1993 to 14 in 1994, the average required amount for an appeal increased by approximately 35 per cent. Though an average of 77 per cent is encouraging, additional funding is sorely needed for many critical emergency situations. A detailed analysis of the response to consolidated appeals in given in annex III.

60. The consolidated appeals process was envisaged as a mechanism to promote integrated needs assessments and greater prioritization and to help to mobilize financial support for humanitarian programmes. In order to set priorities among the funds requested in appeals, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs seeks consensus from the individual organizations on the priorities for emergencies in recognition that each organization can best evaluate the urgency of their activities. In many cases, the process has proved useful in presenting donors

with a balanced view of humanitarian needs and funding requirements. In 1995, appeals for NGO projects were included in a number of appeals, a development which strengthens coordination and complementarity between United Nations and NGO programmes. Given the particular status of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), their programmes are not integrated into consolidated appeal documents, although ICRC and IFRC data may appear in the annex of relevant documents.

61. Unfortunately, the quality of consolidated appeals continues to vary. One important factor is the coordination and support that exists in the field. Poor in-country cooperation may result in the perception that the consolidated appeals process is a burden rather than an opportunity. In such situations, the appeal does little more than present unprioritized programmes of the organizations. Where effective field-level cooperation does exist, the development of a consolidated appeal reflects joint programming.

62. Experience has also shown that highly integrated appeals do not necessarily guarantee good donor response. In ongoing emergencies such as in Iraq, improved coordination on the ground may contribute to an improved appeal that may nevertheless receive little funding because of lack of political or media interest. Despite a deteriorating humanitarian situation, the 1994 appeal for Afghanistan received a little over 35 per cent funding, whereas the 1994 appeal for the countries of the former Yugoslavia received nearly 106 per cent. The funding for Rwanda was barely 40 per cent in 1993. After the mass exodus of July 1994 drew world-wide attention, the new appeal raised almost 96 per cent of the funds requested.

63. In addition, appeals with a high degree of geographical or sectoral complementarity are nevertheless funded in a selective manner; there is a tendency to provide strong support only for certain life-saving interventions and to particular United Nations organizations. For example, within the 1994 appeals for Angola, Burundi and Tajikistan (1993-1994), responses to the food components were at least 100 per cent for each appeal. This was in stark contrast to funding provided to the non-food sectors, which was barely 52 per cent for Angola, 40 per cent for Tajikistan and 21 per cent for Burundi. Likewise, there are dramatic variations in response to different United Nations organizations. In the case of the 1993 Somalia appeal, UNHCR received 78 per cent of requested funds, compared to an average of 24 per cent for other organizations.

64. However, this uneven response is due, in part, to the effectiveness of each organization's own fund-raising efforts and its track record in emergency situations. A coherent response to an emergency requires the availability of funding for a balanced response to vital sectors and activities. Additional funding is therefore needed for relatively neglected yet critical relief activities such as health, agriculture, water and sanitation, as well as for immediate rehabilitation and recovery activities.

65. As a result of growing resource requirements and intensifying competition for scarce funds, some donors are increasingly providing earmarked contributions. A balance must be found between the donors' need for

accountability in the utilization of funds and the organizations' need for flexibility so as to enable them to respond rapidly.

66. In an attempt to broaden the donor base for consolidated appeals, consideration is being given to a coordinated effort among organizations to approach new donors to increase their familiarity with the multilateral humanitarian system. Given that success in mobilizing resources for emergencies is often linked to media coverage, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee is examining ways in which the humanitarian organizations might collectively (through pooling the efforts of media/public relations officers of the organizations concerned) keep the focus on both high profile and less visible, protracted emergencies.

67. When an emergency first occurs and a first-time consolidated appeal is necessary, the challenge for the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is to foster an integrated appeals process without unduly delaying the response of individual organizations. Flash appeals have been issued, for instance in Rwanda and Chechnya, Russian Federation, to facilitate a timely appeal; these appeals were subsequently followed by a more thorough consolidated appeal. The Department recognizes the need to increase the speed with which consolidated appeals are processed and issued and to maximize the inter-agency collaborative planning aspects of flash appeals, including initial agreements regarding division of responsibility.

F. Information sharing

68. Exchange of timely, relevant and reliable information is an essential tool for assessing an emergency situation and for coordinating inputs designed to prevent it, reduce its impact, or respond to it. Communication technology available today provides an opportunity for humanitarian actors to share information more efficiently and effectively than ever before. While there is informal exchange of information between organizations, work needs to be done to increase the exchange in order to facilitate consistency in the assessment of changing situations, determination of priorities and progress towards objectives.

69. In cooperation with interested Governments, United Nations organizations, and NGOs, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is presently establishing an international information sharing system known as "Reliefnet". Reliefnet's primary objective is to make available emergency information that will be of operational use for emergency actors. A secondary objective is to devise an information system that will be available globally, irrespective of the information technology available in a particular location. The realization of these objectives is critically dependent on the sharing of information among humanitarian partners.

IV. CAPACITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

70. While coordination is crucial to an effective system-wide response to humanitarian emergencies, humanitarian organizations have found it necessary to strengthen their response capacity to crises, which have increased both in number and in magnitude. As a result, the international community has witnessed in recent years a rapid expansion in the capacity of humanitarian organizations, which are now quite capable of moving with speed to address most crises.

71. At the same time, humanitarian organizations have also come to realize that, in order to respond to crises of the magnitude seen in the recent past, they must work closely with and rely on the expertise of other organizations, NGOs and interested Governments to augment their own capacity. In this context, it is also important that these organizations should be able to draw on available stand-by capacity available both within and outside interested Governments, including the possible use of military and civilian assets.

72. More importantly, it has increasingly been recognized that indigenous capacities to cope must be strengthened and fully utilized since the affected communities and authorities are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the needs of victims are met. This approach is particularly important for ensuring the timely and effective transition from relief to recovery and rehabilitation, for which the people of the country concerned must assume primary responsibility.

73. It would therefore be appropriate in reviewing the capacity of the United Nations system to take into account the need for international humanitarian organizations to support the strengthening of national capacities. Such a review should facilitate efforts by Member States to address possible constraints, gaps and imbalances in the system, which has evolved rapidly in an ad hoc manner in recent years.

A. Operational capacity

74. United Nations organizations have adapted their operational capacity to the growing demands either through reorganization to give more focus to emergency response or through the development of new management, staffing and administrative structures. It is clear that flexibility and adequate delegation of authority are two of the key elements of a rapid response.

1. Emergency management structures

75. United Nations organizations differ considerably in terms of management structure, delegation of authority, human resources, degree of centralization and organization of their emergency and development capacities. Such variation gives rise to different strengths in terms of flexibility, rapidity of response, accountability and integration of rehabilitation and recovery activities. While decentralization and delegation of authority may increase flexibility and speed of response, as well as allow organizations to work more closely with local communities, concerns about accountability and transparency may increase.

76. The fast breaking nature of most natural and many complex crises necessitates access to people with the right profile and the ability to deploy them at short notice. High turnover of staff is characteristic of many relief organizations. This high turnover, due to the stressful nature of the work and the short-term, temporary nature of most employment contracts, means that valuable experience and lessons are lost to the employing organization. Rapid staff turnover sometimes results in personnel ill-prepared to perform the role required of them. Whether staff are trained or inexperienced, their commitment to humanitarian goals is generally very strong.

77. Some imbalances still need to be addressed in order to give the overall system the possibility to adjust to the fast-changing humanitarian environment. A brief summary of the crisis management structures of United Nations organizations is provided in paragraphs 78 to 88 below.

78. UNHCR has established additional mechanisms during the past three years to increase the efficiency of its emergency response, including rapid deployment teams and stand-by arrangements with external partners to increase its staffing and programme delivery capacity. In addition, UNHCR has considerable structural flexibility to respond to emergencies. UNHCR country representatives are authorized to reallocate up to 15 per cent of their budget between sectors without reverting to headquarters. In cases of sudden large population movements, a UNHCR representative can request an allocation from the UNHCR Emergency Fund and authority to disburse funds under an emergency letter of instruction. Upon issuance of such a letter, the representative may initiate a letter of intent with an implementing partner to incur expenditures, pending signature of a more formal agreement.

79. WFP's operations rely heavily on its network of field offices, which implement relief programmes jointly with recipient Governments, local authorities and NGOs and provide first assessments of relief requirements. Until recently, WFP relied upon its development personnel to deal with emergencies as well. Now, however, the growth of relief operations world wide has necessitated the deployment of dedicated emergency personnel to the field as well as to headquarters. The sudden increase in emergency requirements has given rise to short-term contracts, substantial local recruitment of both expatriate and local staff and additional need for volunteers, both United Nations and others. WFP's emergency training capacity has been enhanced as a result.

80. WFP has created a rapid response facility with staff ready for travel at a moment's notice and the immediate availability of funds to set up operations, including communications, offices and other support services. Funding for the rapid response team has now been incorporated into the regular WFP support budget. In addition, WFP has delegated considerable authority to the country offices, both in terms of cash allocations for local food purchases and setting up of response structures.

81. The formalities for accessing resources are minimal; requests for food and funds can be submitted through WFP country offices or directly to headquarters, are processed immediately and are subject to either local assessment or

assessment with headquarters participation, often on joint inter-agency missions.

82. UNICEF is a highly decentralized organization with a ratio of staffing between headquarters and the field of 20 to 80. Over the past two years, UNICEF has strengthened its emergency management structures in New York and Geneva, and, through the use of short-term staff, in regional offices in Africa. UNICEF's strong field presence, including external relations, networks and counterpart mechanisms in most countries, ensures a linkage between preparation, response and post-emergency activities and the ability to mobilize local resources quickly.

83. UNICEF's emergency operations have been reviewed to improve its emergency responsiveness. Within its headquarters, a weekly high-level task force reviews all ongoing emergencies and reports directly to the Deputy Executive Director. The rapid response team is the heart of UNICEF's rapid response capacity, with five or six staff members per team, participating on a voluntary basis, all selected for their emergency skills and experience. The specific objectives of the rapid response team are to support existing UNICEF presence, set up operations (programme, supply, communication, security and logistics systems); undertake a rapid assessment of the situation of women and children; undertake the initial distribution of assistance; establish initial contacts with the Government and prepare a plan of action.

84. UNDP's emergency capacity is structured around three areas: its national development programmes in prevention and mitigation, support to coordination of relief activities and support to national efforts for recovery and rehabilitation. The Emergency Response Division is the focal point for emergency-related policy, funding and training matters as well as in-house and external coordination. Regional bureaux, each with an emergency focal point, provide operational guidance and support to country offices. The country offices have considerable programme, administrative and financial authority to react to a budding crisis. In the case of a declared emergency, there are simplified procedures for the establishment of local funds, recruitment and procurement. UNDP has a roster of experienced staff available on short notice and 15 budgeted posts reserved for strengthening offices in emergency affected countries.

85. The World Health Organization (WHO) has a three-tiered management structure. Its headquarters, including a Division of Emergency and Humanitarian Action, is responsible for overall policies, which are carried out at the regional level by regional offices in collaboration with WHO country representatives acting at the country level. Country offices have only limited authority and latitude to decide on major administrative and financial actions. WHO is reviewing its procedures with a view to augmenting the operational latitude and responsibilities of its representatives, as has already been done in the African region, where WHO representatives can reprogramme regular country resources for funding emergency response activities with the agreement of the Government.

86. WHO country offices are also being strengthened with additional international and national staff. In addition, WHO is taking the steps

necessary to permit a rapid mobilization of its technical staff in support of its country representatives. WHO is establishing a system of emergency health assessment teams and emergency health coordinators, which will be on stand-by within the WHO structure.

87. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has a Global Information and Early Warning System for Food and Agriculture (GIEWS), which is responsible for the assessment of food needs, including food-aid requirements in emergency situations. The Office for Special Relief Operations is in charge of assessing immediate emergency needs and the mobilization, coordination, transport and distribution of emergency relief assistance. The number of Special Relief Operations personnel at headquarters is limited, as ample use is made of external consultants and of FAO's resources in technical expertise. The Office also receives crucial support from FAO representatives in the field.

88. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has an Emergency Operations Unit, which coordinates the agency's work in the early stages of an emergency. Focal points within the UNESCO secretariat are designated for specific operations. Both the Unit and the focal points report directly to the Director-General or the Assistant Director-General for the Directorate. Simplified administrative and financial procedures for emergency situations have also been elaborated.

2. Technical requirements and bilateral stand-by capacity

89. A key element for a successful response to an emergency, whether natural or man-made, is access to technical support, special skills and the minimum requirements to initiate the assessment of and response to emergency needs. United Nations organizations have developed the full gamut of rapid deployment teams, field kits, stand-by arrangements with donor Governments and stockpiles of equipment and relief supplies.

90. Essential requirements for a rapid response to a crisis include logistics, telecommunications, office equipment and living arrangements. The personnel and equipment necessary to set up field operations must be established quickly and in most cases with little reliance on local procurement or support. To meet the needs of field personnel, some organization, have developed field kits with a comprehensive range of survival items.

91. In collaboration with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs at the warehouse located at Pisa, Italy, WHO stockpiles essential logistics and communication equipment for quick delivery and use by countries affected by emergencies. WFP has similar strategic stocks of equipment at Nairobi. Along with its well-known ready-to-use medical kits, UNICEF has developed and assembled other field-support-oriented ready-to-use kits and has communication and security equipment for use in most emergency situations.

92. While the vast majority of humanitarian assistance is delivered by existing capacities, organizations cannot maintain a level of readiness on the scale required to guarantee rapid mobilization of personnel and equipment to meet

extraordinary crises. Various donor Governments have offered stand-by facilities with staff, turnkey services and equipment available at short notice. Most organizations are improving the speed with which they can assemble and deploy a team at short notice by resorting to these bilateral arrangements with Governments.

93. A recent innovative means of improving operational capacity is the UNHCR concept of the "service package": self-contained facilities and services provided by donor Governments when traditional emergency response mechanisms are insufficient. This "service package" was used in Rwanda and is in the process of being developed and refined in order to ensure that the packages are truly self-supporting and require minimum supervision/coordination.

94. The military and civil defence assets of many Member States are well situated to provide support to a full range of emergency services in natural disasters in the fields of, inter alia, communications, transport, medical services and search and rescue activities. In addition to provision of support for emergency field operations, defence assets could carry out critical infrastructure construction and repairs. Their structures are intended to respond rapidly in a self-contained and highly mobile fashion. The military and civil defence assets project of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs is similarly aimed at improving the management of military assets in natural and technological emergencies. In the framework of this project, a network of networks among relevant international and regional institutions was launched to enhance cooperation. It includes close cooperation with the Partner for Peace programme, as well as the establishment of a dedicated database on national military and civil defence capabilities.

95. In 1994, military assets continued to play a vital role in the UNHCR airlift to Sarajevo and were mobilized on a large scale in response to the massive exodus of Rwandans to eastern Zaire. Military and civil defence expertise was integrated into field missions to the Republic of Moldova and Algeria in connection with floods in those countries. In the light of the potential of military and civil defence assets, an Inter-Agency Standing Committee task force is developing a common framework for their use when appropriate in support of all types of humanitarian operations.

96. WFP's capacity to move large quantities quickly by sea, air and land is renowned and many relief organizations, from both within and outside the United Nations system call upon WFP to assist. While the cost is extremely competitive, the transport costs are relatively high in contrast to the costs of the basic commodities, such as grains, that are shipped. WFP has often brought in outside truck fleets in order to augment the transport capacity of hosting countries.

97. WHO is developing stand-by arrangements to complement its staffing resources with the medical emergency response units of a number of countries, as well as with schools of public health and other specialized centres. In Rwanda, UNICEF reached an agreement with the American Public Health Association, Center for Disease Control. Building on the Rwanda experience, UNICEF has commenced negotiations with Governments and institutions to develop additional stand-by response facilities to meet needs in health, nutrition, water and sanitation,

logistics, security, unaccompanied children, education, social mobilization and publicity.

98. UNICEF is developing basic assistance kits to support emergency response in the areas identified above. In addition, UNICEF has developed and assembled medical, school and office ready-to-use kits. UNESCO has developed a teacher emergency package, comprising a kit of materials for teaching basic literacy and numeracy accompanied by a training programme for implementation based on a "train the trainer" approach for emergency situations.

99. An additional important component of stand-by capacity for rapid response to both natural and man-made emergencies is the existing system of stockpiles of emergency supplies run by the United Nations, Governments and NGOs. These stockpiles provide a stand-by source for relief supplies that can be flown to the site of an emergency within hours of a disaster declaration.

100. Many organizations have stockpiles of pertinent assistance items. UNICEF has a well-established stockpile facility at Copenhagen with the capacity to respond globally at competitive prices. WFP and WHO have joined the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in stockpiling food and medical supplies in a warehouse at Pisa, Italy. This warehouse aims to fill gaps which cannot be met by another United Nations organization or donor nation.

101. In order to improve the usefulness of the various stockpiles, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has established a register of emergency stockpiles, which includes both specifications and available quantities and provides easily accessible information as to the potential for immediate shipment of relief consignments to affected areas. The register is an important tool to increase awareness of existing capacities among the humanitarian community and recipient countries. The Department is also working with the World Customs Organization on a model agreement between the United Nations and a Member State, which would expedite the movement of humanitarian consignments and disaster relief teams in the event of an emergency.

102. In the past, the best efforts of humanitarian organizations to deploy supporting telecommunications equipment such as radios and satellite communications have sometimes been delayed at national borders owing to lack of prior customs clearance. In October 1994, the Plenipotentiary Conference of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) adopted resolution 36, in which Member States are urged to take all practical steps for facilitating the rapid deployment and the effective use of telecommunication equipment for disaster mitigation and for disaster relief operations by reducing and, where possible, removing regulatory barriers and strengthening transborder cooperation between States. It is hoped that steps will be taken by the Economic and Social Council in 1995 to move this process forward. It is recommended that an open-ended ad hoc intergovernmental working group of experts be established by the Council to examine proposals and draft a basic text for consideration and adoption as a convention on emergency telecommunications.

3. Cooperative arrangements

103. Humanitarian response to many emergencies is a multifaceted operation calling upon the capacity of numerous organizations, both indigenous and international. Within the existing system, no single organization can possibly meet all the needs of a suffering population. Several United Nations humanitarian organizations have moved to optimize the collective response through regularizing coordination with other humanitarian organizations within the United Nations and with NGOs, as well as the above-mentioned bilateral arrangements.

(a) Memoranda of understanding among United Nations organizations

104. Most of the United Nations humanitarian organizations have recognized the importance of relying on one another's comparative advantages and special skills. Memoranda of understanding have been signed between many United Nations organizations to provide guidance to inter-agency collaboration. Some of these memoranda extend beyond a specific emergency; almost all refugee food requirements are channelled through WFP under the WFP/UNHCR memorandum of understanding. Other memoranda, such as the one between UNDP and UNHCR, are country-level agreements that spell out collaborative arrangements between the organizations in order to facilitate seamless programme support to affected populations. UNICEF is actively seeking to develop memoranda of understanding with WFP, UNHCR and WHO.

105. In addition, some inter-agency relationships, like the one between UNHCR and UNICEF, are based on mostly field-oriented letters of understanding and other ad hoc arrangements. FAO and WFP collaborate in food assessments and in early warning based upon their long-standing collaboration.

106. Longer-term arrangements between United Nations organizations have also been developed. The increase in industrial accidents, the magnitude and potential consequences of which demand an international emergency response, has led to a joint Environment Unit between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. UNEP retains substantive responsibility for dealing with environmental aspects of emergencies, including industrial accidents, while the Department of Humanitarian Affairs assures operational coordination.

107. Organizations of the system have also increased cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers Programme in meeting some of their staffing requirements in the field.

(b) Collaboration between United Nations organizations and NGOs

108. The humanitarian community could not function without local and international NGOs. Their enormous contribution goes beyond that of implementing partners. Use of indigenous NGOs should be encouraged to mobilize local resources and to ensure that there is a proper transition from relief to rehabilitation and recovery.

109. NGOs have emerged as mainstream partners in emergencies. UNHCR and UNICEF have long experience in working closely with NGOs in emergency settings. To strengthen collaboration, both organizations have developed guidelines to enhance their partnership with NGOs. In addition, UNICEF has been pursuing initiatives to enhance relationships with NGOs in the field by concluding memoranda of understanding, and to strengthen capacity-building and other links with indigenous NGOs. WFP and FAO systematically engage NGOs as implementing partners to assist in the distribution and monitoring of humanitarian assistance because of their relevant experience and presence in the field.

110. WHO has regularly worked with NGOs in many areas of the world. WHO is presently consulting with major medical NGOs to define how such collaboration can be further developed. UNESCO has established cooperation with national and international bodies such as the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Jesuit Refugee Service to provide short-term staff for emergencies. UNICEF presently relies on stand-by/turnkey arrangements with Swedrelief and the Norwegian Refugee Council for training in emergency preparedness and staff security.

(c) Potential of "White Helmets"

111. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/139 B of 20 December 1994, envisages the participation of volunteers or "White Helmets" in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development. The main benefit accruing to the United Nations from the White Helmets initiative would be the easing of the capacity and resource problems encountered by the United Nations system as a result of the high level of instability and friction world wide. In addition, the White Helmets concept could strengthen South-South collaboration and enhance national operational capacities.

112. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Volunteers Programme, in consultation with Member States and intergovernmental organizations, have looked at the feasibility of this proposal and considered how qualified national volunteer teams could complement existing arrangements. Successful implementation of the White Helmets initiative will depend on the willingness of Governments to marshal qualified manpower for such voluntary service under United Nations auspices and on the availability of the necessary resources. A detailed report on the White Helmets initiative, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/139 B, will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

B. Financial capacity

113. In 1994, United Nations organizations had access to almost $3 billion for humanitarian assistance. Adding to that figure the amount spent by the rest of the humanitarian community (non-United Nations partners, NGOs, IFRC, ICRC and aid agencies of major donors having an operational capacity), substantially more than $5 billion was spent in 1994 for programmes of humanitarian assistance.

114. The rising number of complex crises has placed a great burden on the capability of the United Nations system to respond to emergencies. In some

organizations, Member States responded by providing more financial flexibility and increasing access to emergency funds. These efforts are laudable and must be pursued, and additional funds and flexibility must be provided to enable the United Nations system as a whole to take a multifaceted approach to tackle the complexity of the consequences of crises, as well as their root causes. The situation, organization by organization, is described in paragraphs 115 to 127 below. The table in annex IV shows the budgets, emergency expenditures and emergency reserves of selected organizations.

115. In UNHCR, within the general programmes budget approved annually by the Executive Committee, there are three possibilities for funds to be used in response to new humanitarian situations. As a result of flexibility provided by the Executive Committee, these budgetary arrangements, which are not earmarked to regions or commodities, have been created or increased over the past few years.

116. These budget allocations ensure significant resources and flexibility to allow an immediate response to crises. The Emergency Fund now stands at $25 million, from which up to $8 million can be allocated to any one emergency during the year. If this fund is depleted, UNHCR can draw temporarily up to $8 million from its Working Capital and Guaranteed Fund, established at $50 million. The programme reserve, currently set at 10 per cent of annual programmed activities (or some $34 million in 1995) can also be used to respond to needs resulting from new influxes of refugees within existing case-loads. Finally, UNHCR is authorized to use a general allocation for voluntary repatriation, currently set at $20 million, to promote or initiate voluntary repatriation activities whenever the possibility arises.

117. WFP relies for its funding for relief operations principally on the International Emergency Food Reserve, which has an annual target of 500,000 tons. Although this target has invariably been exceeded, it remains insufficient to respond to all emergency situations. The second source of funding, a subset of the regular WFP budget, is for protracted refugee and displaced persons relief operations. This mechanism depends on voluntary pledging for specific operations and provides no guarantee of continuity in the long term.

118. The third source of funding is the immediate response account, which has an annual target of $30 million to allow for early interventions when an emergency occurs. This account has never been fully funded and therefore tends to get exhausted early in the year. An additional source of funding for relief operations is bilateral pledges, either in response to WFP requests for specific emergency operations or as a result of donors' decisions to channel their bilateral contribution through WFP. This funding has been extremely useful in resolving many acute emergency requirements, such as road repairs and airlifts, and to finance operations not falling into the classic group of natural and man-made emergencies. However, pledges are often for specific emergencies and thus restrict WFP action considerably.

119. Although contributions to the protracted relief operations are more secure, some of them are also specifically directed and do not permit reallocation by WFP to the most deserving operations when shortages occur. WFP can borrow from

development resources, both financially and for food, which allows for rapid access to essential supplies of food. However, such loans are constrained by the reduction in development-oriented resource flows; furthermore some recent emergency operations are situated in areas where little development activity takes place. In order to ensure the availability of cash for management of emergency operations, WFP emergency budgets now include delivery and administration costs.

120. UNICEF mobilizes resources for emergency activities through diversion of funding already allocated to the country, reprogramming, the Emergency Programme Fund, supplementary funds received against appeals and the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. Diversion of funds already available to the country is often the first recourse. For diversions up to $50,000 Government consent is sought, although UNICEF headquarters approval is not necessary. Reprogramming involves the reallocation of more than $50,000 of country programme resources previously earmarked for development programmes. For reprogramming and diversion, if there are no recognized authorities with which to negotiate, the representative has the discretion to reallocate or divert funds as long as there is headquarters approval.

121. UNICEF has a biannual Emergency Programme Fund of $30 million. Resources from the Fund are used to provide the cash necessary for the initial response in complex emergencies in order to meet interim needs in expectation of the launching of a consolidated inter-agency appeal or pending receipt of donor contributions against an appeal. Occasionally, resources from the Fund will be used to initiate action at the initial stage of an emergency when there is no appeal and are thus allocated without the expectation of being replenished.

122. UNDP emergency relief assistance is largely funded from special programme resources, which are approved by the Executive Board over a five-year planning cycle for the purpose of disaster mitigation. All activities proposed for funding under special programme resources must have been fully discussed at the country level with the United Nations disaster management team. Requests for approval of special programme resources funds for specific activities must be directed to UNDP headquarters from country offices, except in selected countries classified as highly vulnerable to sudden natural disasters, where approval authority for emergency phase activities has been delegated to the UNDP resident representative.

123. Two subcategories of special programme resources funds are available to meet immediate humanitarian assistance requirements. The first is for emergency phase activities, and usually contains an average annual amount of $1 million for allocations to a maximum of $50,000 per disaster per country. These funds can be used for emergency-related coordination, support services for deployment of relief supplies and for direct emergency assistance (provided that the relief supplies to be procured are not covered under the mandate of a different United Nations organization and they are not to be used for rehabilitation and/or reconstruction purposes).

124. The second subcategory, for refugees, displaced persons and returnees, is funded at an average annual level of $1.4 million. Funds from this category also have spending caps. A maximum of $50,000 per situation is available for

emergency assistance to internally displaced persons to fill crucial gaps not met by other United Nations system resources and for activities oriented to needs assessment and project development pertaining to refugees and returnees. Funds for the coordination of assistance to displaced persons are limited to $100,000 per displacement situation.

125. WHO has an Emergency Revolving Fund of $900,000 in unearmarked resources available for immediate emergency response for each biennium. The Fund is divided into a $400,000 replenishable component and a $500,000 allocation. WHO must rely on resources mobilized through consolidated appeals or the limited amounts available through regional offices for its response to urgent emergency requirements.

126. Emergency projects undertaken by the Office for Special Relief Operations of FAO are financed by its own technical cooperation programme from contributions from governmental, non-governmental and United Nations organizations. There is no flexibility in the use of funds allocated by donors for specific activities. FAO has recognized the need to establish an emergency revolving fund to meet immediate requirements, including for teams to assess the impact of a calamity on the agricultural sector and to formulate interventions.

127. In 1993, UNESCO's General Conference approved $2.4 million for addressing emergency needs in 1994 and 1995. There is an accelerated procedure to process requests for emergency assistance. Such requests must be addressed to UNESCO by the Government concerned. The Director-General has also financed UNESCO emergency operations with savings from the regular budget, that is, limited reallocations of funds foreseen for a specific activity. Essentially, however, UNESCO's emergency operations rely on extrabudgetary funding. An Emergency Relief Fund has been established for voluntary contributions. UNESCO does collect funds for countries emerging from emergency situations. Significant funding is collected within this context for activities within the Culture of Peace Programme and the unit dealing with refugee education.

128. Given the recent increase in the number and complexity of emergencies to which the United Nations system has been called upon to respond, it is timely for Member States to review the capacity of the United Nations humanitarian organizations. In doing so, Governments may wish to take appropriate measures to strengthen the operational and financial capacities of these organizations so that the system as a whole can respond quickly, effectively and equitably to the range of critical short- and medium-term needs of those affected by disasters and emergencies.

V. RECOVERY AND TRANSITION

129. The ability of the humanitarian community effectively to assist countries damaged by systemic breakdowns or societal implosion to move from relief assistance to steps towards rebuilding a civil society depends on the political resolve of the international community to address fully the underlying problems of emergencies. This ability is also affected by the intricate process of identifying, engaging with and making accountable local community authorities and structures. Without such commitments, humanitarian organizations and development agencies, such as UNDP, the World Bank and bilateral aid agencies can do little to assist societies in their transition from dependency upon relief assistance to affirmative, engaged participation in the restructuring of their nation. In this context, it is often difficult to define the appropriate transition away from humanitarian operations.

130. Until recently, traditional wisdom argued that responsibility for the convalescence of a society was transferred from humanitarian actors to development partners in a linear progression along what was called the "relief to development continuum". The assumption was that such baton hand-overs could be accomplished smoothly and that donor momentum or interest would remain constant throughout the process. In fact, in many situations, success by the international community in stabilizing the humanitarian crisis is not accompanied by longer-term political stability. Protracted political instability often results in a reduction of international assistance, thus limiting resources available to support a transition to recovery. The experiences of Rwanda, Somalia and the Sudan, as well as concerns about the future of such ongoing operations as those in Angola, reveal a fundamental flaw in the traditional notion of a relief to development continuum.

131. Recent experiences have highlighted difficulties which have to be addressed in dealing with recovery and transition. Such problems include the following:

(a) A perceived scarcity of empowered local leadership able to interact with the international community to take over and guide the transition process. A classic example is Somalia, where only limited numbers of local leaders who could assume the responsibility for peacemaking, political accommodation and rehabilitation emerged;

(b) Frequent donor fatigue when a protracted conflict or emergency seems to lead nowhere. After years of war and crisis, the situation in the Sudan only occasionally grabs the international community's attention;

(c) An absence of significant donor resources for the rehabilitation and recovery phases. Most donor funds are earmarked for either disaster assistance or long-term development. In Burundi and Rwanda, opportunities for breaking the cycle of impunity and starting on a path to reconciliation are being forfeited because of delays in and lack of resources targeted to the judicial systems.

132. The goodwill associated with a successful international emergency operation provides a window of opportunity upon which the international community must capitalize. A community's goodwill and its willingness to compromise among its

own members and with others are often lost if resources for recovery and follow-up support are not forthcoming in a timely manner.

133. To begin to address these problems, the international community should, at the very inception of an emergency, focus on the sustainability of the impact of humanitarian assistance, especially through the empowerment of local authorities and structures. Supporting local structures in their efforts to guide the humanitarian endeavour will greatly enhance the international community's ability to address the essence of a crisis and to identify and support opportunities for diffusing tensions. Continued support to representative local structures beyond the emergency relief stage through the recovery process has the potential to assist nascent and fragile peace efforts to flourish.

134. To date, attempts by the United Nations system to bridge the recovery funding gap have focused on a number of mechanisms, of which the two most prominent are the consolidated appeal and round-table discussions. Recognizing the protracted and complex nature of many crises, UNDP has expanded the round-table concept to assist States in situations of protracted instability; a round table was held for Rwanda. Round tables, in facilitating the interaction between donors and the Governments concerned, are, by their very nature, country specific, and require significant preparation. In situations such as Somalia where government structures remain to be established, round tables remain fairly complicated to organize. The consolidated appeal has also been utilized in some instances to address immediate recovery requirements. Such appeals aim to address the totality of needs in an emergency situation and provide sufficient time for the preparation of follow-up activities by other partners. Recognizing the potential overlap between the round-table mechanism and the consolidated appeals process, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP are currently reviewing these mechanisms to ensure complementarity.

135. One critical constraint which organizations of the system face in a period of transition is the availability of upfront resources to address immediate recovery needs. In conflict situations where peace has just been restored, such activities could be critical to stabilizing and improving fragile situations. The window of opportunity for such activities, however, is often limited and should be fully utilized. Experience has shown that the response of donors to longer-term rehabilitation requirements often takes time. In the light of these circumstances, it is proposed that a window of an additional $30 million be created in the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to be used for quick action to support immediate recovery and transition activities undertaken by organizations of the United Nations system. This new facility is intended to be a bridge between emergency relief operations and the beginning of reconstruction and rehabilitation. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP, in consultation with other partners of the United Nations system, will jointly work out modalities for the use of this new facility.

VI. THE CHALLENGE OF PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

136. With respect to natural disasters, the response capacity discussed in the previous section (rapid response teams, stockpiles and stand-by capacities) provides critical life-saving support at the onset of a natural disaster.

However, support for the building of national capacity in natural disaster management is well-recognized as the most effective ongoing assistance the international community can provide. This principle, enunciated in Yokohama in 1994 at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, must be translated into action through early warning programmes, training, workshops, education and technical support.

137. Over the last 25 years, the damage caused by natural phenomena to people and the productive infrastructure of developing countries has steadily risen. Economic damage has more than tripled from $40 billion in the 1960s to $140 billion in the 1980s. There are strong indications that this trend will continue. Natural disasters, like complex emergencies, absorb increasing amounts of global resources and set back development agendas. Besides human and economic losses, they also can destabilize the social and political fabric.

138. Successful disaster preparedness and mitigation programmes can save thousands of lives. In 1977, some 10,000 persons died when a tropical cyclone hit the coast of Andhra Pradesh in India. Thirteen years later, a storm of similar force struck the same area, but less than 1,000 deaths were reported because 600,000 persons had been evacuated in the previous 2 days. Nations once known for their devastating droughts have set up food security arrangements that now almost totally protect them from the impact of major droughts.

139. However, the challenge remains. The factors that make countries vulnerable to disasters increase in dimension much faster than the means of Governments to control them. The Governments concerned, international development organizations and donors realize that vulnerability to disasters has become a major obstacle to economic and social development. It is estimated that the impact of natural disasters is 20 times greater in poorer countries than in industrialized settings. While many disaster-prone developing countries have to contend with competing demands on their scarce resources, vulnerability reduction programmes are considered as an important, integral part of their development strategies.

A. Early warning capacity and action on such warnings

140. Radar systems installed in countries bordering the Bay of Bengal, rainfall monitoring stations in the Himalayas, the data-gathering and evaluation mechanisms in the Sahel countries detecting the development of drought situations, together with other early warning systems, have undoubtedly saved many lives. New technologies, particularly in data gathering and communication, have made possible many advances in the predictability of potentially destructive natural phenomena.

141. Although technological improvements have increased the capacity of early warning systems, they have also, to a certain degree, widened the gap between the alert message and the end receiver in developing, disaster-prone countries. The discrepancy lies in the often highly technical content of the warning itself and the capacity of communities in disaster-prone areas to first of all understand and secondly act upon it. This, obviously, is particularly important in countries with different languages and local dialects. The point to note,

and one needing continuous attention, is that early warning is not yet a disaster preparedness measure in itself. It takes a functioning disaster preparedness system at the national and local levels to translate early warning signals into an understandable message for the end users at the community level. An example of such a system is the cyclone preparedness project in Bangladesh. The project draws on the services of more than 20,000 volunteers in the country's cyclone exposed coastal areas who, when the meteorological service gives the alarm over pre-established communication lines, go with megaphones to villages and ensure a prompt reaction. Here is an obvious area for disaster mitigation work at the local level for the United Nations organizations concerned in collaboration with Governments and grass-roots non-governmental organizations.

142. The United Nations is currently reviewing existing natural disaster early warning arrangements and a report will be presented in September 1995 to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.

143. Within the United Nations system, there are various early warning capacities focused by sector. To name but a few, FAO's GIEWS, in association with WFP, has the overall responsibility for crop monitoring and food-needs assessments, for the assessment of emergency requirements, as well as for the rapid dissemination of its assessments. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has the responsibility and strong capacity for early warning information relating to meteorological data. Outside the United Nations system, the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), sponsored by the United States of America, and work on vulnerability assessment maps, a collaborative effort of Save the Children UK, FEWS, FAO and WFP and funded by both the European Union and the Government of the United States, are mechanisms that contribute to a better understanding of the development of complex and man-made emergencies.

144. As a coordinating body for humanitarian affairs, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been involved in the development of a mechanism which cuts across sectors for early warning information. The Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS) is being developed to provide up-to-date warnings of country situations through analysis of its database, drawing upon the various early warning mechanisms of other United Nations organizations, as well as non-United Nations information sources. HEWS completed its prototype in January 1995 and has expanded its country coverage since then. It will become operational very shortly. UNDP is developing a risk analysis and vulnerability indicators programme to analyse the risks arising from social, economic and political tensions.

145. In the case of complex crises, even with the presence of early warning mechanisms, the international community may only be able to mitigate the suffering. However, even this response requires action that is often lacking, as was the case in Somalia. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is looking at means of encouraging action upon receipt of an early warning. A recent development is joint, ad hoc consultations between the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs, Peace-keeping Operations and Political Affairs to ensure a common understanding and appreciation of the nature and potential impact of looming crises. When appropriate, these meetings will produce joint proposals

for preventive measures for consideration by the senior task force on United Nations operations.

B. Training programmes

146. The scarcity of resources for humanitarian assistance highlights the importance of investment in human resources development, particularly at the local and national levels.

147. The efforts of the United Nations to implement the concept of disaster mitigation as a multisectoral and inter-ministerial discipline rely heavily upon training. Disaster mitigation in the multisectoral sense is of recent origin, and consequently requires intensive awareness raising among government officials at all levels. Specialized training activities are an excellent means to reach a large number of officials concerned as well as representatives from the non-governmental sector.

148. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs/UNDP disaster management training programme facilitates national capacity-building for all phases of emergency management (prevention through reconstruction). Fifty per cent of the participants in disaster management training events are nationals of developing countries, and the training programme has recently enlarged its target group to 70 emergency-prone countries. In countries where national workshops for disaster management training are conducted, UNDP may propose funding for projects to strengthen national capacity for disaster prevention, mitigation and management from its special programme resources up to $250,000.

149. Specific sectoral emergency training programmes are the key to sectorally appropriate emergency response, and most United Nations humanitarian organizations have developed and refined such training programmes for their staff. For instance, UNICEF has a well-developed training programme for emergency preparedness and management, including security and critical stress management. It has trained over 300 staff members at all levels, as well as staff from other United Nations organizations and NGOs. The disaster management training programme, envisaged as a training programme for natural disasters, draws upon these existing training capacities and adds to them through its focus on coordination and team-building among United Nations organizations, donors, NGOs and national Governments, particularly in the field but also at headquarters. The training programme is working to enhance the participation of and full coordination among United Nations organizations. The programme also aims to generate and disseminate new doctrine and concepts and lessons learned from past emergencies.

150. On the basis of experience from disaster management training for natural disasters, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee working group has agreed that an inter-agency core group will be established to pursue humanitarian training issues in the complex emergency sphere, including development of linkages between humanitarian training, human rights, peace-keeping and peacemaking.

C. Building national capacity for natural disaster management

151. Building national capacity for natural disaster mitigation and management takes the form of advisory services, group training, seminars and workshops, fellowships, field projects and publications. Numerous United Nations organizations, working within their mandate, promote and assist countries to implement disaster reduction programmes and develop institutional capabilities for disaster management. These organizations provide further service to countries by making international knowledge on disaster reduction experiences, concepts and approaches accessible. For example, UNESCO promotes research on the causes of hazards and on technical and engineering means to mitigate their effects, and works to further public awareness through education, information and communication. Recently, in response to the risks from volcanoes for the very large local and refugee population in eastern Zaire, UNHCR, UNICEF and WHO as well as ICRC and IFRC delegates and national officials, held a series of meetings coordinated by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to contribute the perspective and knowledge of their organizations for disaster reduction.

152. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is often an orchestrator and promoter of disaster-reduction efforts. It aims to reduce human suffering and damage and destruction from natural disasters through activities that address the preventive aspects of humanitarian assistance and create awareness and opportunities for disaster reduction in a development context. For instance, the Department worked in close collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, WMO, ITU and Habitat to hold subregional workshops in Africa to promote and plan activities for disaster reduction.

153. In its facilitation role, the activities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs include servicing of International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction bodies, international liaison, information dissemination and the development of new initiatives to contribute to the development of national and regional disaster-reduction capabilities. This approach is complemented by other technical support activities, including advisory services, group training, seminars and workshops, fellowships and field projects. A full report on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction will be before the General Assembly at its fiftieth session and the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1995.

154. Disaster reduction efforts of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs have traditionally been carried out in liaison with national disaster management authorities. While it remains important to facilitate and support adequate attention for pre-disaster measures by the disaster management authorities, the need to increase the involvement of national and United Nations development institutions is becoming apparent. This will require much closer cooperation with development planning authorities, local government and public and private investors. The Department and UNDP are developing tools to allow development officials to assess potential disaster risks and integrate these considerations into their daily work, and UNDP is expected to fund the UNDP/Department of Humanitarian Affairs project on disaster impact assessment for development projects.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

155. Humanitarian organizations are on the front lines today both in meeting the immediate needs of disaster victims and in confronting the challenges inherent in the dramatically changed environment of humanitarian assistance. There is greater awareness of the dynamics which generate marginalization and disintegration and of the limited, albeit significant, role of humanitarian assistance in the alleviation of suffering and in helping people to survive. Humanitarian organizations are also in the forefront of devising innovative strategies both to strengthen core capacities that form the backbone of relief operations and to identify new means of responding to the unprecedented needs. However, in the absence of effective measures to address the root causes of conflict, humanitarian assistance will be reduced to merely a tool to contain crises and the most visible aspects of their destructiveness.

156. The ability of humanitarian organizations to respond to disasters that destroy lives and means of livelihood is seriously compromised by an alarming disrespect for fundamental humanitarian norms. One of the great challenges in responding to crises is to find ways to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law.

157. The well-being and integrity of victims of armed conflict, and their right to humanitarian assistance, must be recognized and respected. The international community has both a moral and a legal obligation to hold accountable those who violate fundamental humanitarian norms. It is recommended that, in accordance with the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, Member States should use their influence with parties to an armed conflict to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law and respect for the activities undertaken by impartial humanitarian organizations such as ICRC. For its part, the United Nations, and in particular those charged with preventive diplomacy and peacemaking tasks, will endeavour to make compliance with humanitarian law a central focus of its activities.

158. Commensurate with the protection and provision of assistance to civilians is the security that must be afforded to humanitarian practitioners who carry out these activities. Member States should take greater cognizance of the myriad dangers and threats to personal safety faced by humanitarian workers and support the enhancement of existing security arrangements, as recognized in the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Specifically, it is recommended that the United Nations should have the capacity to make adequate security arrangements from the onset of any crisis that has the potential to endanger humanitarian workers. This may require rapid deployment of one or more officers provided by the United Nations Security Coordinator's office at the beginning of a crisis either to supplement existing security arrangements or to establish a presence where none previously existed. To deploy this capacity quickly, it is further recommended that interest accrued on the Central Emergency Revolving Fund should be utilized to support the deployment to initiate security arrangements and that donors should respond positively to requests for funding of security arrangements that are included in consolidated appeals in order to reimburse the Fund.

159. Within the humanitarian community, much has been accomplished in defining common objectives and strategies geared to achieving greater complementarity of inputs and more effective use of limited resources. However, greater synergies could be achieved if the advice and direction given by Member States to the governing bodies of individual agencies and programmes was geared to a more unified approach within the United Nations system. Thus, it is recommended that Member States take account of the larger context within which humanitarian assistance is provided in order to ensure greater coherence in the direction given to the governing bodies of United Nations specialized agencies and programmes. It is further recommended that Member States give adequate support to all United Nations organizations and give due consideration to the importance of funding consolidated rather than individual appeals to ensure more coherent implementation of humanitarian programmes.

160. The consolidated appeals process has proved its worth in both generating coherent programmes and in mobilizing resources in a manner that facilitates a balanced response to needs. However, it is fully understood that, in some instances, needs are poorly prioritized within specific crises and there is room for additional streamlining in both the organization and the presentation of appeals. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and its collaborating partners, are fully committed to strengthening the appeals process. However, the effectiveness of the consolidated appeals process is largely dependent upon the response of Member States. There is, for example, a continuing discrepancy in resources made available for food and for non-food requirements, and rehabilitation programmes are often poorly funded compared to other activities. The availability of additional unearmarked contributions for a particular crisis would help ensure that all vital needs are met and would strengthen the capacity of organizations to work together in developing a consolidated programme. It is recommended that Member States give due consideration to the possibility of furnishing such support when responding to future appeals.

161. One of the most glaring deficiencies in the overall response of the international community is the general lack of support for strengthening indigenous capacities and local mechanisms to cope throughout a crisis. Yet the strength of these local mechanisms is a major determinant in the struggle of affected communities to recover. It is recommended that United Nations humanitarian organizations, as well as international NGOs, consider the greater use of local NGOs and other indigenous expertise in the planning and execution of relief and rehabilitation activities.

162. Despite recognition of the importance of rehabilitation and confidence-building measures, there is a dramatic dearth of funding for such activities. Even when donor support for rehabilitation programmes exists, the funding mechanisms are often too slow to maintain the necessary momentum to break the cycle of violence or address the conditions that perpetuate instability. It is important that funds which can be accessed quickly are set aside for immediate rehabilitation activities. In this connection, it is recommended that a separate window with an additional $30 million be opened within the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to act as a catalyst for such activities.

163. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund has proved its value in facilitating a both rapid and joint response by United Nations organizations to fast-breaking

emergencies. However, the revolving nature of the Fund demands that resources are replenished quickly to ensure its full utility. Except on three occasions, United Nations organizations have been able to repay funds extended to them. In order to maintain the Fund at the minimum level of $50 million as stipulated by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/186, it is recommended that Member States respond favourably to the proposal to replenish the Fund to cover advances that have been outstanding for more than a year in the amount of $6.12 million. It is also recommended that the scope of the Fund be expanded to facilitate the provision of emergency assistance in the case of protracted emergencies. The Fund would only be drawn upon in such circumstances in a judicious manner.

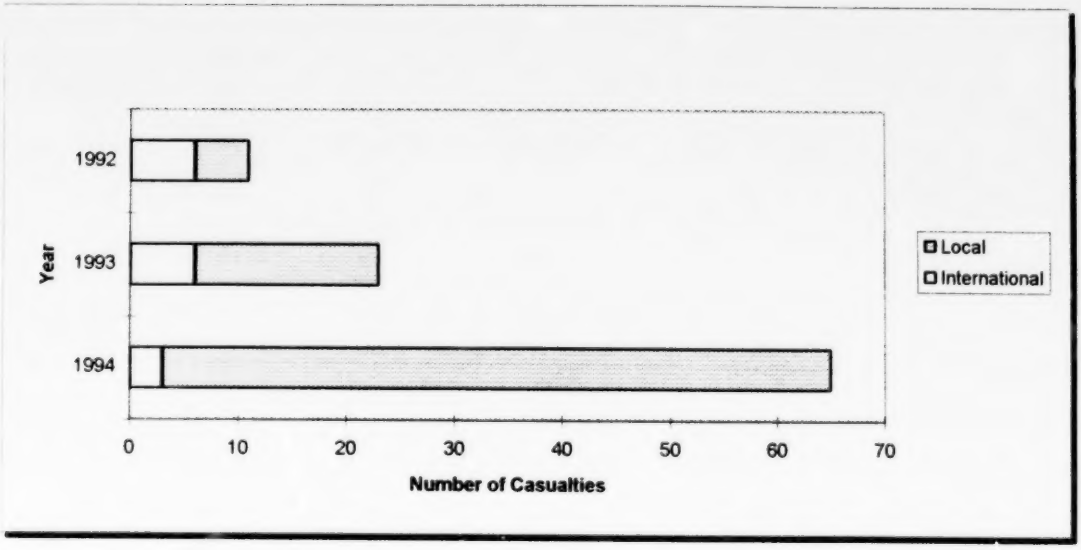
164. Recent experience has demonstrated the necessity and value of coordination of international humanitarian efforts in managing crisis response. Ensuring adequate interaction, exchange of information and coherence in policy and approach between all actors at various levels in fast-moving, complex crisis situations demands a structure that is adequately resourced and able to function in a timely and effective manner. While much has been accomplished, as evidenced by the rapid system-wide response to recent crises, coordination of the United Nations humanitarian system remains an ongoing challenge. The limited regular budget funding available to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs due to overall resource constraints of the Organization, poses limitations in its capacity in the face of accelerated incidence of humanitarian emergencies. It is a matter of some importance that Member States consider ways to provide the necessary extrabudgetary support to the Department on a sustainable basis. This will help ensure both continuity and strengthening of the Department's key coordination role within the international humanitarian system. In this context, the proposal for donors to earmark a percentage of their contributions to consolidated appeals for the Department's coordination activities merits serious consideration.

Notes

1/ ST/SGB/251.

ANNEX I

Casualties among United Nations civilian personnel



Source: Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator.

Note: For details on these incidents, consult the annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly regarding respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

ANNEX II

Central Emergency Revolving Fund

A. Advances and reimbursements

(as at 31 May 1995)

Year	Operational organization	Project area	Date of advance	Amount of advance	Date of reimbursement	Amount of reimbursement	Amount outstanding
1992	UNICEF	Kenya	24 Aug. 1992	2 000 000	31 Dec. 1992 and 22 Oct. 1993	2 000 000	-
	UNICEF	Somalia	24 Aug. 1992	5 000 000	22 Dec. 1992	5 000 000	-
	UNCHAS	Somalia	10 Sep. 1992	500 000	29 Jan. 1993	500 000	-
	FAO	Somalia	30 Sep. 1992	1 600 000	24 June 1993	1 600 000	-
	WHO	Somalia	24 Oct. 1992	2 000 000	29 Mar. 1993	2 000 000	-
	UNICEF	Iraq	11 Nov. 1992	5 000 000	15 Apr. 1993	5 000 000	-
	UNHCR	Afghanistan	24 Nov. 1992	5 000 000	6 Jan. 1993	5 000 000	-
1993	UNICEF	Mozambique	22 Jan. 1993	2 000 000	2 Feb. 1994 and 1 Aug. 1994	2 000 000	-
	WFP	Tajikistan	25 Mar. 1993	4 500 000	3 May 1994 and 10 June 1994	2 036 121	2 463 879
	WHO	Former Yugoslavia	26 Mar. 1993	2 500 000	5 May 1994	2 500 000	-
	UNHCR	Georgia	22 Apr. 1993	2 000 000	16 Sep. 1993	2 000 000	-
	UNICEF	Iraq	14 June 1993	5 000 000	21 Oct. 1993	5 000 000	-
	UNHCR	Tajikistan	18 June 1993	5 000 000	29 Dec. 1993 and May 1994	5 000 000	-
	WFP	Iraq	21 June 1993	4 000 000	3 May 1994 and 9 Aug. 1994	4 000 000	-
	UNICEF	Haiti	23 July 1993	1 000 000	25 Apr. 1994 and 1 Aug. 1994	1 000 000	-
	WFP	Lebanon	3 Sep. 1993	560 000	3 Jan. 1994	560 000	-
	Habitat	Lebanon	9 Sep. 1993	5 000 000	21 Mar. 1994 and 17 June 1994	1 693 276	3 306 724
	UNICEF	Iraq	27 Oct. 1993	7 000 000	1 Feb. 1994	7 000 000	-
	UNHCR	Burundi	19 Nov. 1993	5 000 000	1 June 1994	5 000 000	-
	WFP	Burundi	22 Dec. 1993	5 000 000	3 May 1994	5 000 000	-
1994	UNICEF	Angola	6 Jan. 1994	1 500 000	19 May 1994	1 500 000	-
	IOM	Zaire	6 Jan. 1994	1 000 000	8 July 1994	649 846	350 154
	UNICEF	Sudan	17 Feb. 1994	1 000 000	20 June 1994	1 000 000	-
	FAO	Sudan	23 Feb. 1994	200 000	16 May 1994	200 000	-
	UNICEF	Former Yugoslavia	16 Mar. 1994	1 000 000	31 Aug. 1994	1 000 000	-
	UNDP	Kenya	18 Mar. 1994	500 000	13 Apr. 1995	500 000	-
	WHO	Former Yugoslavia	29 Mar. 1994	2 500 000	31 Oct. 1994	2 500 000	-
	UNICEF	Somalia	28 Apr. 1994	4 870 000	22 July 1994 and 24 Oct. 1994	4 870 000	-
	UNREO	Rwanda	28 Apr. 1994	200 000	8 Sep. 1994	200 000	-

Year	Operational organization	Project area	Date of advance	Amount of advance	Date of reimbursement	Amount of reimbursement	Amount outstanding
	UNHCR	Tajikistan	20 May 1994	3 000 000	21 Dec. 1994	3 000 000	-
	UNHCR	Rwanda	1 June 1994	10 000 000	29 Sep. 1994 and 21 Nov. 1994	10 000 000	-
	UNICEF	Rwanda	21 July 1994	3 000 000	30 Dec. 1994	3 000 000	-
	WFP	Rwanda	22 July 1994	5 000 000	30 Dec. 1994	5 000 000	-
	HCHR/HR	Rwanda	7 Oct. 1994	3 000 000		-	3 000 000
	UNICEF	Sudan	28 Dec. 1994	3 000 000	24 May 1995	1 684 721	1 315 279
1995	UNICEF	Northern Iraq	4 Jan. 1995	930 000	26 Apr. 1995	930 000	-
	UCAH	Angola	27 Jan. 1995	480 600		-	480 600
	WFP	Rwanda	7 Mar. 1995	5 000 000		-	5 000 000
	Total			115 840 600		99 923 964	15 916 636

Note: UNCHAS = United Nations Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance in Somalia.
UNREO = United Nations Rwanda Emergency Office.
HCHR/HR = High Commissioner for Human Rights/Human Rights.
UCAH = Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Unit.

B. Status of contributions

(as at 26 June 1995)

	Pledges (United States dollars)	Collections (United States dollars)	Date paid
Algeria	20 000	20 000	7 Dec. 1994
Australia	800 000	743 600	27 July 1992
Austria	500 000	500 000	30 Mar. 1992
Belgium	330 000	327 327	17 Sep. 1992
Canada	2 300 000	2 195 321	16 and 22 June 1992
Colombia	10 000	10 000	4 Feb. 1993
Denmark	2 000 000	1 999 985	31 Aug. 1992
Finland	1 500 000	1 533 804	18 June 1992
France	5 600 000	934 579	16 Nov. 1992
		4 545 455	8 and 27 Jan. 1993
Germany	5 000 000	5 000 000	30 June 1992
Holy See	50 000	50 000	22 May 1992
	20 000	20 000	20 Dec. 1994
Iceland	10 000	10 000	6 July 1992
Ireland	100 000	100 000	18 June 1992
Italy	5 000 000	4 284 184	10 Dec. 1992
Japan	5 000 000	5 000 000	27 July 1992
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	5 000	5 000	6 Oct. 1993
Liechtenstein	7 000	6 641	10 Apr. 1992
Luxembourg	100 000	100 000	13 Aug. 1992
Malaysia	20 000	20 000	15 June 1993
Mauritius	10 000	10 000	1 July 1992
Monaco	40 111.73	20 000	19 July 1994
		22 260	4 May 1995
Netherlands	3 000 000	3 083 590	12 June 1992
New Zealand	140 000	136 825	23 Mar. 1992
Norway	1 850 000	1 849 970	5 May and 10 June 1992
Republic of Korea	50 000	50 000	11 June 1992
Russian Federation		250 000	23 May 1995
Spain	750 000	671 544	7 June 1993
		88 453	4 Mar. 1994
Sweden	2 750 000	2 408 744	25 Nov. 1992
Switzerland	2 000 000	999 985	25 Aug. 1992
		999 985	13 Jan. 1993
United Kingdom	5 000 000	5 000 000	24 Apr. 1992
United States	6 200 000	2 500 000	15 Apr. 1992
		3 700 000	23 Feb. and 19 July 1993
NGOs	1 000	1 000	17 June 1992
Total	50 163 111	49 198 252	

C. Status of utilization of the Fund

	(United States dollars)
Contributions received	49 198 252
Less: advances	(115 840 600)
Add: reimbursements	99 923 964
Add: interest earned (as at 30 April 1995)	2 560 789
Fund balance (as at 31 May 1995)	35 842 405

	1992	1993	1994	1995 (up to 31 May 1995)
Total number of advances	7	13	15	3
Total number of reimbursements	2	9	30	3

ANNEX III

Analysis of United Nations consolidated inter-agency humanitarian assistance appeals

A. List of appeals launched or ongoing

(mid-1992 to mid-1995)

(Compiled by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs on the basis of information provided by the respective appealing organizations.)

Appeal	Launch date (inclusive dates)	Revised requirements (United States dollars)	Income (contributions/ pledges and carryover) (United States dollars)	Needs covered (percentage)	Target beneficiaries
1992					
Afghanistan a/	June 1992-Dec. 1992	179 700 000	85 167 562	47.4	2 500 000
DESA	June 1992-May 1993	950 621 543	724 236 155	76.2	25 876 775
Iraq (phase IV) b/	Jan. 1992-June 1992	145 000 000	120 000 000	82.8	2 775 000
Iraq (phase V) b/	July 1992-Mar. 1993	265 000 000	217 000 000	81.9	2 775 000
Liberia c/	July 1991-Sep. 1993	149 958 000	102 012 000	68.0	1 400 000
SEPHA	Jan. 1992-Dec. 1992	1 145 765 086	913 298 762	79.7	19 000 000
Total for appeals launched in 1992: Number of appeals: 6 Number of countries: 18		2 836 044 629	2 161 714 479	76.2	54 326 775
1993					
Afghanistan a/	Oct. 1993-Mar. 1994	59 828 000	29 440 638	49.2	2 000 000
Afghanistan a/	Jan. 1993-Sep. 1993	112 600 000	47 231 026	41.9	1 300 000
Angola	May 1993-Apr. 1994	226 054 100	104 054 450	46.0	1 963 000
Armenia	July 1993-Mar. 1994	26 204 201	14 380 584	54.9	1 820 000
Azerbaijan	July 1993-Mar. 1994	25 592 203	18 203 471	71.1	1 000 000
Burundi	Nov. 1993-Feb. 1994	7 949 722	4 781 286	60.1	1 827 000
Eritrea	Jan. 1993-Dec. 1993	80 511 855	43 475 434	54.0	1 560 000
Ethiopia	Jan. 1993-Dec. 1993	300 965 048	146 322 469	48.6	8 261 500
Former Yugoslavia	Jan. 1993-Dec. 1993	993 856 315	989 423 702	99.6	3 820 000
Georgia	Mar. 1993-May 1994	27 454 025	14 351 743	52.3	250 000
Haiti c/	Mar. 1993-Sep. 1993	62 727 000	11 907 336	19.0	6 500 000
Iraq (phase VI) b/	Apr. 1993-Mar. 1994	467 067 650	122 962 593	26.3	2 775 000
Kenya	Jan. 1993-Dec. 1993	185 651 470	124 322 507	67.0	2 373 000
Liberia	Nov. 1993-Dec. 1994	168 435 179	85 398 363	50.7	3 000 000
Mozambique d/	May 1993-Apr. 1994	616 170 254	542 205 545	88.0	8 250 000
Rwanda	Apr. 1993-Dec. 1993	78 533 519	30 816 105	39.2	1 192 000
Somalia	Mar. 1993-Dec. 1993	148 086 950	36 086 950	24.4	4 447 000
South Lebanon/West Bekaa	Aug. 1993-Jan. 1994	28 745 200	3 447 462	12.0	350 000
Sudan	Jan. 1993-Dec. 1993	194 536 780	124 228 363	63.9	3 270 000
Tajikistan	Jan. 1993-Mar. 1994	32 517 840	17 523 474	53.9	400 000
Zaire	Oct. 1993-June 1994	76 222 520	10 085 989	13.2	2 247 000
Total for appeals launched in 1993: Number of appeals: 21 Number of countries: 24		3 919 709 831	2 520 649 490	64.3	58 605 500

Appeal	Launch date (inclusive dates)	Revised requirements (United States dollars)	Income (contributions/ pledges and carryover) (United States dollars)	Needs covered (percentage)	Target beneficiaries
1994					
Afghanistan a/	Oct. 1994-Sep. 1995	106 393 000	6 904 982	6.5	1 700 000
Afghanistan a/	Apr. 1994-Sep. 1994	62 067 000	21 372 934	34.4	1 000 000
Angola	Feb. 1994-Dec. 1994	181 229 482	158 253 592	87.3	3 284 300
Burundi	Mar. 1994-Aug. 1994	59 189 827	36 816 029	62.2	1 368 000
Caucasus	Apr. 1994-Mar. 1995	123 900 905	77 261 624	62.4	3 077 000
Former Yugoslavia	Jan. 1994-Dec. 1994	721 169 025	761 215 468	105.6	4 259 000
Haiti	Dec. 1994-May 1995	78 005 000	40 316 066	51.7	2 220 000
Iraq (phase VII) b/	Apr. 1994-Mar. 1995	288 514 237	92 499 621	32.1	1 300 000
Kenya	Jan. 1994-Dec. 1994	96 413 997	54 860 331	56.9	1 620 000
Mozambique d/	May 1994-Dec. 1994	205 979 833	128 155 138	62.2	8 250 000
Rwanda	July 1994-Dec. 1994	589 403 829	562 127 171	95.4	3 900 000
Sudan	Jan. 1994-Dec. 1994	185 936 129	157 892 856	84.9	6 500 000
Tajikistan	Apr. 1994-Dec. 1994	42 539 510	25 706 905	60.4	605 000
Yemen	Aug. 1994-Feb. 1995	21 715 240	3 205 018	14.8	375 000
Total for appeals launched in 1994: Number of appeals: 14 Number of countries: 19		2 762 457 014	2 126 587 735	77.0	39 458 300
1995					
Angola	Jan. 1995-Dec. 1995	212 766 409	1 962 002	0.9	3 226 543
Caucasus	Apr. 1995-Mar. 1996	118 004 581	5 236 592	4.4	3 170 737
Chechnya	Jan. 1995-June 1995	25 053 660	8 079 802	32.2	220 000
Former Yugoslavia	Jan. 1995-June 1995	241 731 697	171 859 982	71.1	2 244 400
Iraq (phase VIII)	Apr. 1995-Mar. 1996	183 311 662	Update pending	0.0	1 300 000
Liberia	Jan. 1995-June 1995	65 348 947	26 931 723	41.2	1 500 000
Rwanda/Subregion	Jan. 1995-Dec. 1995	766 512 672	309 672 947	40.4	3 700 000
Sierra Leone/Guinea	Mar. 1995-Dec. 1995	14 672 958	Update pending	0.0	500 000
Somalia	Jan. 1995-June 1995	70 310 235	6 693 339	9.5	1 550 000
Sudan	Jan. 1995-Dec. 1995	101 082 462	3 196 336	3.2	5 866 816
Tajikistan	Jan. 1995-Dec. 1995	37 289 923	9 965 221	26.7	600 000
Total for appeals launched in 1995: Number of appeals: 11 Number of countries: 17		1 836 085 206	543 597 944	29.6	23 878 496

Note: DESA = Drought emergency in southern Africa.
SEPHA = Special emergency programme for the Horn of Africa.

a/ As reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan.

b/ As reported by the special emergency programme for Iraq.

c/ As reported by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, New York.

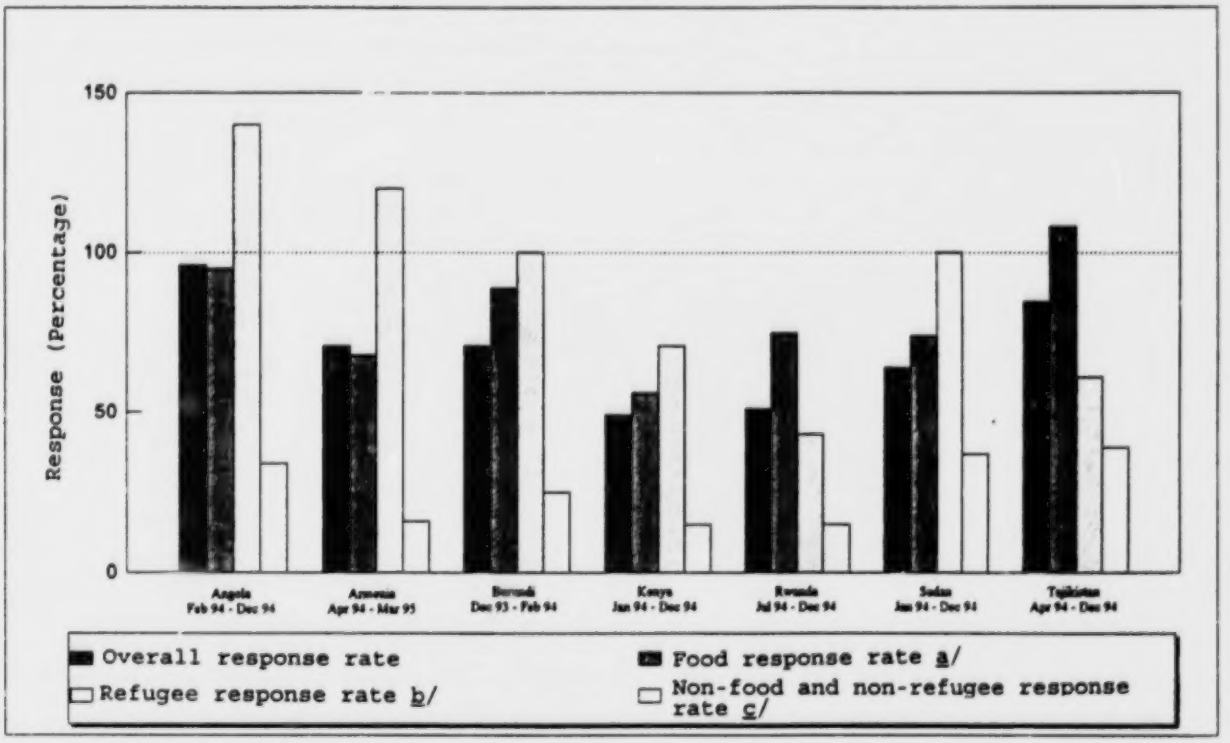
d/ As reported by the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Coordination, Mozambique.

B. Summary of requirements, contributions and target populations

(mid-1992 to mid-1995)

Year	Number of appeals launched	Number of countries included in appeals	Requirements (United States dollars)	Funding as reported by appealing organization (contributions/ pledges) (United States dollars)	Target populations	Needs covered (percentage)
June-Dec. 1992	6	18	2 836 044 629	2 161 714 479	54 326 775	76.22
1993	21	24	3 919 709 831	2 520 649 490	58 605 500	64.31
1994	14	19	2 762 457 014	2 126 587 735	39 458 300	76.98
Jan.-May 1995	11	17	1 836 085 206	543 597 944	23 878 496	29.61

C. Response to consolidated appeals by sector
(selected examples)

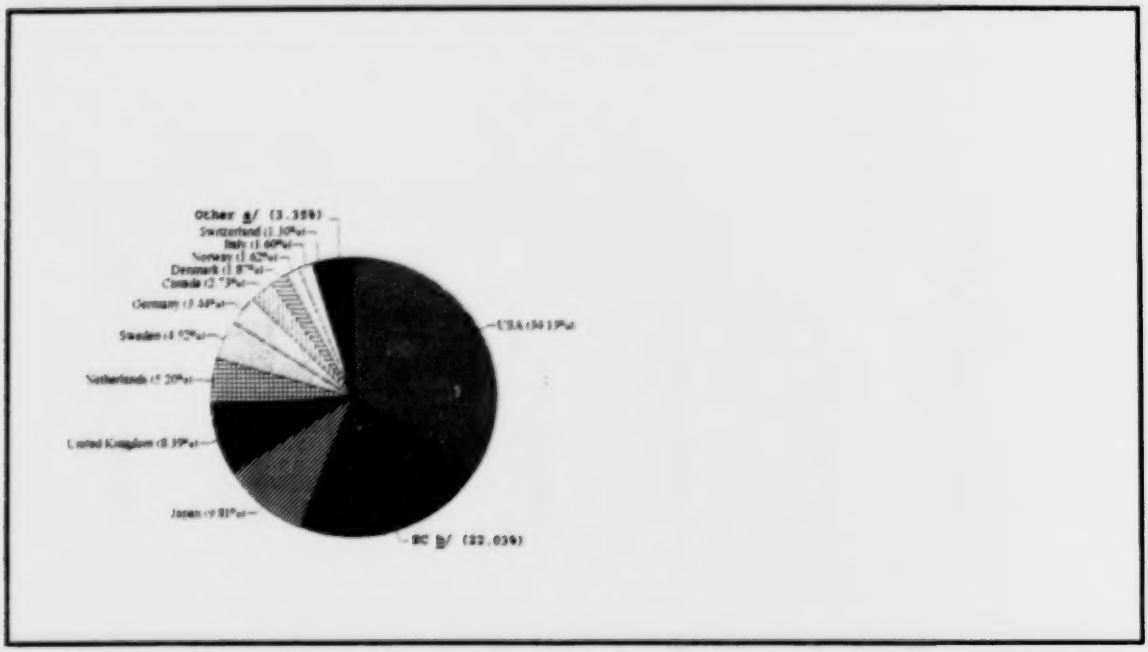


a/ As reflected in response rate to WFP.

b/ As reflected in response rate to UNHCR.

c/ As reflected in response rate to other appealing organizations.

D. Analysis of donor response in 1994

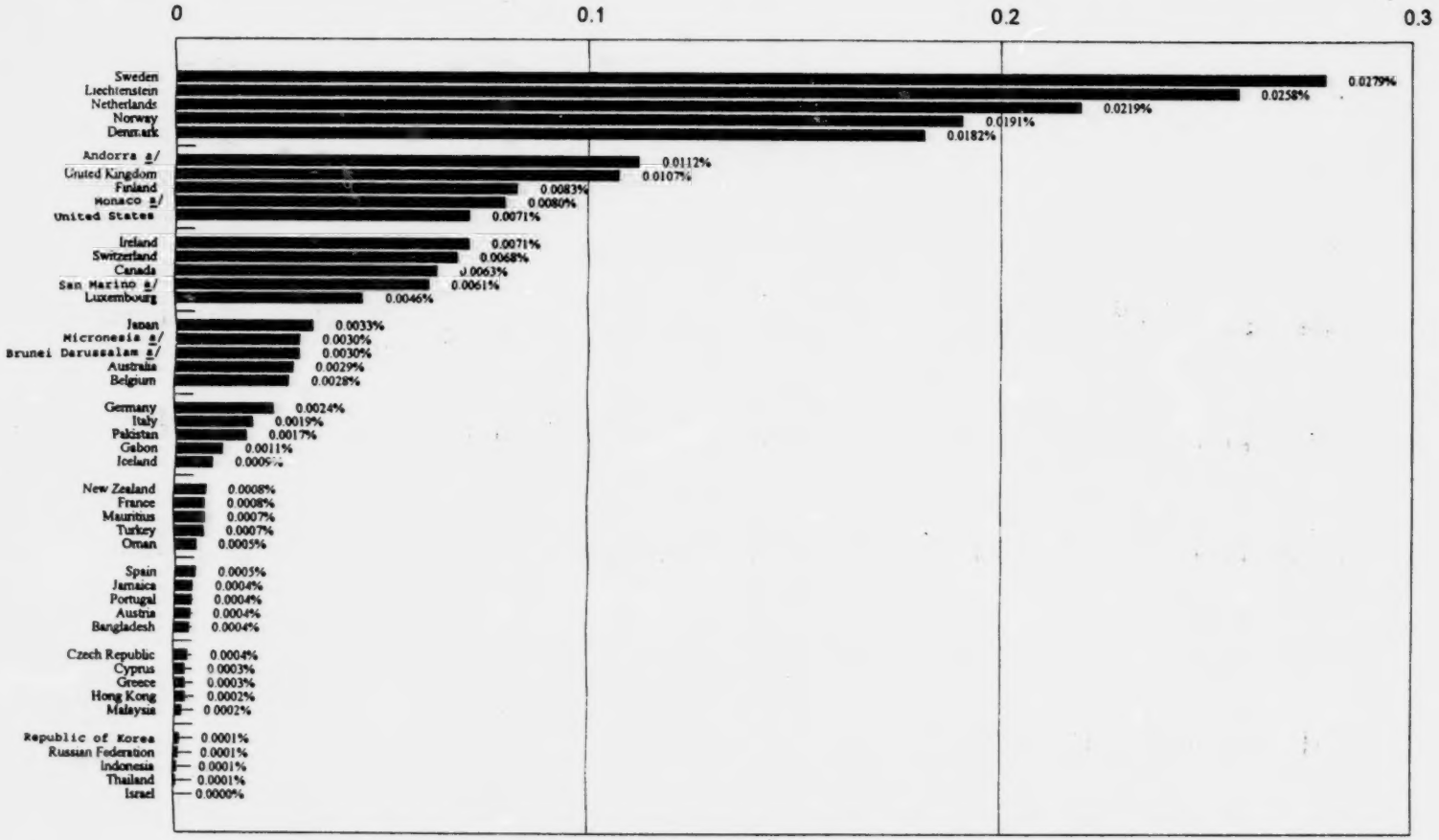


a/ Includes Andorra, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Gabon, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Micronesia, Monaco, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Portugal, Russian Federation, San Marino, Spain, Thailand and Turkey.

b/ Total for European Community does not include aid accorded by Member States (amounting to approximately $365.3 million).

E. Summary of donor contributions in 1994 as percentage gross national product

(Thousands)



Source: World Bank World Atlas, 1995, pp. 18-19, except where otherwise indicated.

a/ Data taken from World Data Book, second edition, Guiness Publishing Ltd., pp. 54-59. Dates for GNP are as follows: Andorra (1992), Brunei (1989), Micronesia (1989), Monaco (1992), San Marino (1992).

ANNEX IV

Budgets, emergency expenditures and emergency reserves in 1994 of selected organizations

(United States dollars)

	Budget	Amount/ percentage to emergencies	Emergency reserve (if any)
FAO	673 114 000 a/	5 603 600 b/	N/A
UNHCR	1 200 000 000	N/A	25 000 000
UNICEF	801 000 000	216 000 000 27%	9 000 000
WFP	1 400 000 000	980 000 000 70%	c/
WHO	1 000 000 000	34 000 000 3.4%	900 000 d/

a/ Biennium 1994-1995.

b/ Technical cooperation programme; expenditures from trust funds amounted to $30,868,514.

c/ International Emergency Food Reserve.

d/ Comprises $500,000 per biennium (non-replenishable) suballocated to Division of Emergency and Humanitarian Action from Development Programme and $400,000 transferred from the WHO Voluntary Fund for Health Promotion to the Special Account for Disasters and Natural Catastrophes.

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Fiftieth session
Item 20 (a) of the preliminary list*
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 1995
Item 5 of the provisional agenda**
SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS

Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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* A/50/50/Rev.1.

** E/1995/100.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In resolution 49/139 B of 20 December 1994, entitled "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development", the General Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Economic and Social Council at its next substantive session, incorporating the views expressed by Governments and appropriate intergovernmental organizations and relevant entities within the United Nations system, in particular the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV), on ways and means of strengthening national and regional stand-by arrangements, including the establishment and full utilization of national volunteer corps, in the area of emergency humanitarian assistance, as well as in the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, bearing in mind existing mandates and activities of the United Nations system.

2. The General Assembly invited the Secretary-General, in this context, to include in his report the results of his assessment of the potential of:

(a) The provision by the Department and UNV of coordination for activities to be undertaken by national volunteer corps, including the supportive role of the Resident Coordinator at the country level;

(b) The establishment of a distinct window within the Special Voluntary Fund of UNV for channelling funds for operational purposes;

(c) The use of databases within the United Nations system to coordinate and facilitate the rapid provision of assistance by national volunteer corps to the United Nations system;

(d) Experiences at the national level with regard to, inter alia, selection and training, deployment, status and security, and the effective utilization of stand-by arrangements.

II. VIEWS AND COMMENTS ON THE "WHITE HELMET" INITIATIVE

3. The Secretary-General invited Governments, intergovernmental organizations and relevant entities within the United Nations to express their views on the "White Helmet" (WH) initiative and on the implementation of the General Assembly resolution.

A. Views expressed by Governments

4. Twenty-three Governments (Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Chile, Ecuador, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay and Zambia)

responded to the Secretary-General's letter. Twenty-two Governments endorsed the WH initiative and expressed their willingness to participate in its immediate realization. Fifteen Governments also declared their willingness to play an appropriate role in matters relating to the training of such national volunteer corps.

5. The question of the financing of WH volunteer corps brought out a more diverse set of responses from Governments. Only one Government pledged a financial contribution to the WH fund, while six Governments expressed their willingness to do so. In their responses, three Governments referred to the possibility of private sector financing for the initiative.

B. Views expressed by intergovernmental organizations

6. The Organization of African Unity expressed active interest in obtaining WH support in some of the relevant operations undertaken by its member States. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe conveyed its interest in the initiative and in identifying ways to help in its financing, as well as its willingness to collaborate as far as training was concerned.

C. Views expressed by entities within the United Nations system

7. Responses were received from 14 relevant entities within the United Nations system. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations welcomed the initiative, indicating interest in the use of qualified volunteers, and agreed to assist in training and in seeking funding. The International Labour Organization conveyed its wish to participate in the initiative, as necessary, and listed several areas of specific interest where trained volunteers would be appreciated. Special reference was made to the training facility in Turin and the role it could play in preparing national volunteer corps for United Nations service. The International Maritime Organization expressed keen interest in the WH initiative and drew attention to its need for highly specialized staff. The Universal Postal Union indicated that its emergency work required volunteer staff and, therefore, it would participate in the WH initiative. However, it was not in a position to offer either training or financing. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization supported the idea of WH volunteers and agreed to consider their use, training and possible funding. The World Health Organization also welcomed the initiative and agreed that it could help provide needed health support in the context of relief, rehabilitation and development assistance, as well as assist in strengthening cooperation between developing countries. It stressed the importance of relating the volunteer corps closely to the agency staff active in the field and stated its willingness to offer advice for the training of such volunteers. It also maintained that the financing requirements would have to be met through additional contributions before the WH initiative could become operational. The International Fund for Agricultural Development stated that its functions did not relate to the inquiry.

8. Within the United Nations itself, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) affirmed its interest in participating in the WH initiative. However, it did not foresee any role in the training of volunteers or in financing the initiative. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development also conveyed its interest in qualified national volunteers in a variety of technical cooperation tasks undertaken by the organization. The United Nations Population Fund responded favourably to the inquiry and offered to assist in the training and, to some extent, the financing of national volunteer corps.

9. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that it had worked for years with stand-by capacities drawn from several non-governmental organizations and from UNV, reflecting the profile required for refugee-related field work. These special arrangements had proved to be cost-effective and were expected to fulfil many staff requirements of UNHCR; however, to the extent WH volunteers were integrated into UNV, UNHCR would welcome cooperation, particulary in strengthening capacity in specialized fields. The United Nations Children's Fund also expressed interest in taking part in the WH initiative and agreed to play a role in the training of such volunteers and to help seek funding for the initiative. The World Food Programme welcomed the WH initiative and elaborated on the practical implications of using local staff in relief operations. It agreed, in principle, to participate on an "as necessary" basis. It expressed willingness to offer advice on training needs and recalled its financial dependence on the donor community. Two regional commissions, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, replied that the use of WH volunteers, by them, was not considered likely at the present time.

10. In order to consult as broadly as possible, letters of inquiry were also addressed to United Nations Resident Coordinators. While many Governments have not yet formally responded to the Secretary-General's letter, several discussed with the respective field offices issues relating to the WH initiative. These discussions also served to clarify what the local authorities would need to do in preparing national personnel for participating in the envisaged volunteer corps.

III. DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS: PARTNERS IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS

11. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/139 B, called on the United Nations system, and in particular the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNV, to contemplate and encourage the use of WH expertise available from the newly created national volunteer corps to support activities in the area of emergency humanitarian assistance, as well as in the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

A. Department of Humanitarian Affairs

12. The primary role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, is to facilitate a coherent, coordinated and timely response by the United Nations system to emergencies and natural disasters.

13. The Emergency Relief Coordinator takes the lead in securing agreement on the division of responsibilities among organizations of the United Nations system in responding to emergency situations in accordance with their respective mandates. The Coordinator is also responsible for establishing coordination mechanisms, organizing needs assessment missions, preparing consolidated appeals and mobilizing resources; facilitating access to populations in need and ensuring that emergency assistance is provided in ways that are supportive of recovery and longer-term development so as to reduce dependency on emergency relief. The Coordinator provides guidance to United Nations Resident Coordinators on the exercise of their responsibility, under normal circumstances, for coordinating humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system at the country level. The Coordinator is responsible, in particular, for facilitating the preparedness of the United Nations system, assisting in the transition from relief to development and promoting the use of locally or regionally available relief capacities.

B. United Nations Volunteers

14. The United Nations Volunteers programme was established on 1 January 1971. In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, UNV was placed under the administrative auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and charged to work "in collaboration with the United Nations agencies concerned".

15. The nature and scope of its mandate has enabled UNV to participate, as an integral partner, in various peace-keeping and peace-building operations, humanitarian relief, and rehabilitation and development programmes, as well as in activities in support of democratization processes. The role played by UNV within the United Nations system as a whole is now well recognized and appreciated and has resulted in calls for increased use of UNV-provided personnel in the above-mentioned operations.

IV. STRENGTHENING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL STAND-BY ARRANGEMENTS

A. Experience

16. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs has considerable experience in developing and maintaining stand-by arrangements, especially for responding to natural disasters. Two such specific capacities relate to the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams and the Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA) project. UNDAC teams have successfully assisted in responding to numerous disaster situations. The teams comprise national experts whose stand-by availability is agreed upon between the Governments and the

Department. The experts collaborate closely with United Nations personnel. While specialized training of the teams is the responsibility of the national Government, additional training is provided by the Department for the purposes of their deployment to ensure their full effectiveness. The teams are financed and maintained by national Governments. In certain cases, national Governments also finance their deployment.

17. The MCDA project provides for the utilization of military and civil defence assets to support the United Nations system in its response to natural disasters. Guidelines for the use of MCDA in international response to natural, technological and environmental emergencies have been finalized. Arrangements have also been made to identify training requirements for MCDA military and civil defence personnel and to design appropriate curricula. Several field-based exercises have helped prepare participants in the actual use of MCDA in simulated disaster-relief situations.

18. The experience of the Department with UNDAC and MCDA can be brought to bear on the key issues relating to the availability, training and deployment of stand-by national teams in the implementation of the WH initiative.

19. The United Nations Volunteers programme has, through the development of new strategies, linkages with national providers of volunteer professionals and partnerships with United Nations system organizations. It has demonstrated a capacity for rapidly fielding large numbers of volunteers in support of United Nations field operations. Since its first activities with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA) and the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), to the more recent United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), and including current operations such as the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), and the United Nations Mission for Verification of Human Rights and Compliance with Comprehensive Agreements on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA), more than 2,000 UNV volunteers have served or are serving in humanitarian and emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, repatriation, human rights and electoral programmes. 1/

20. As the initiator of the WH project, the Government of Argentina has established a Comisión de Lucha Contra el Hambre y la Pobreza. The Commission and UNV have collaborated on the elaboration of the WH initiative and on developing a workable model within the framework envisaged by the General Assembly in resolution 49/139 B.

21. Through their collaborative efforts, the Commission and UNV are seeking to develop the capacity to provide, through UNV, volunteer expertise for United Nations organizations for effective and rapid response. The increased capacity of the Commission, as well as the deployment and utilization of teams identified and constituted through it, will enable it to participate in and contribute substantially to relevant United Nations operations. Initial proposals being considered in this context include projects in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Haiti and Gaza.

22. The model, once refined, could help guide the WH process and may be replicated for other national volunteer corps, with adaptations as required on a country-by-country basis.

B. Areas of possible utilization

23. The number, size and complexity of United Nations operations have grown significantly in recent years. They increasingly extend beyond traditional roles to cover a broad range of functions, from humanitarian relief assistance in complex emergencies to repatriation and resettlement, restoration of infrastructures and social services, community-level post-conflict confidence-building, conflict prevention/resolution, assistance in human rights monitoring and electoral processes, as well as in administration and management. In situations of complex emergencies, their activities are expected to focus, at least initially, on emergency response and early stages of rehabilitation.

24. The WH process could facilitate the mobilization of existing local expertise, revitalize previously constituted local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, as well as help in the organization and promotion of new arrangements.

25. The UNV programme has consistently sought to promote participatory processes by using appropriate volunteer modalities, including mixed teams of international and national personnel, and by creating direct linkages between UNV specialists and local populations. The basic premise of UNV is that, whatever the circumstance, the populations concerned must have the right, and the ability, to influence actions affecting their lives. Local capacities for voluntarism would be promoted and strengthened.

26. Based on past experience where United Nations volunteers, in collaboration with United Nations bodies, have assisted in a diverse range of activities, WH deployment could include:

(a) Assuring the delivery of urgent food and non-food relief supplies (e.g., housing) and services (e.g., basic health, sanitation, epidemiology) to victims of forced migration;

(b) Providing support to local emergency relief coordinating units, including necessary skills and local managerial capacity to support effective access to afflicted populations;

(c) Assisting in registration for return, and in logistical and technical arrangements for resettlement and repatriation, of refugees and internally displaced persons;

(d) Assisting in monitoring respect for, and enabling protection of, human rights, together with measures for confidence-building and conflict prevention/resolution at the community level;

(e) Assisting in demobilizing, retraining and reintegration efforts;

(f) Supporting the reorganization/operation of local services (for example, health centres, food distribution, housing);

(g) Enabling the victims of forced population movements to return to their countries of origin or to integrate in their countries of refuge.

C. Coordination arrangements for the "White Helmet" initiative

27. In accordance with its mandate, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs would ensure the necessary coordination in the field. In close consultation with United Nations Resident Coordinators and together with its operational partners, the Department would assess the need for additional personnel in a particular emergency situation and identify with UNV the special skills and volunteer component strength required.

28. Mechanisms already exist for the ad hoc fielding of teams in the earliest stages of emergency and the identification and recruitment of personnel required to meet needs in emergency and related operations. Implementation of the WH initiative would involve adding to these mechanisms certain arrangements, under the aegis of the Department and UNV, to address inter alia the following:

(a) The identification and definition of appropriate sectors for WH involvement;

(b) Establishing respective responsibilities in mission assessment and planning activities, professional categories, and composition of field teams, as well as essential professional qualifications of personnel required;

(c) Screening and selecting stand-by WH teams and team members available for deployment on short notice;

(d) Ensuring, as appropriate, in accordance with distribution of WH teams, ethnic and geographic diversity and gender sensitivity;

(e) Deployment time and procedures for fielding of WH teams and volunteers;

(f) Status and conditions of service for WH personnel within the overall framework of conditions of service for United Nations field personnel;

(g) Financial and accountability arrangements and requirements;

(h) Modalities for integration of WH personnel, individually or in field teams, within the operational structure of the missions;

(i) Reporting channels, procedures and requirements.

D. Financing

29. The viability of the WH initiative is ultimately predicated on the availability of financing for their training and deployment. As stipulated in General Assembly resolution 43/139 B, UNV has established a separate account within its Special Voluntary Fund for contributions for the implementation of activities envisaged for the WH initiative. Only one Government has so far committed funds to the initiative, while some have expressed interest and others have referred to the possibility of private sector financing.

30. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs is prepared to explore in general, as well as for specific cases, the use of the consolidated appeal process for WH-related fund-raising. The way in which consolidated appeals are currently framed would make it possible, once the initiative becomes operational and volunteer teams are available for field assignments, to include in such appeals a provision for the financing of the use of WH volunteers in United Nations operations. The existing shortfalls in relief funding should, however, be borne in mind in this context.

E. Databases and other arrangements to facilitate the rapid utilization and deployment of "White Helmets"

31. UNV maintains a roster of candidates as the central component of the process of matching suitable candidates with identified needs. Organized according to areas of UNV interventions, the roster lists several thousand candidates distributed among major occupational groups and subdivided into professional categories. The composition of the roster is determined by demand and supply considerations and takes into account such additional elements as nationality, gender and language skills.

32. The strengthening of national arrangements and the development of national volunteers sending capacity are integral components of the UNV mandate. On this basis, UNV would endeavour to develop arrangements that would ensure the most effective cooperation with the providers of WH volunteers.

33. UNV operates within the UNDP network of field offices and maintains national focal points in developing countries, as well as cooperating organizations in 39 industrialized countries. In addition to these traditional recruitment partners, UNV occasionally calls on professional associations, educational institutions and other organizations specializing in a particular field, and/or undertakes targeted advertising and recruitment campaigns when required to supplement or replenish its roster.

34. In support of the WH initiative and to meet needs identified in the field, a decentralized model of national participants, which includes information on types of teams ready for deployment and functional areas of expertise, could be envisaged as part of an overall roster system maintained by UNV in accordance with the parameters defined by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and UNV.

35. National participating organizations would be expected to constitute teams of qualified volunteers (perhaps focusing on a limited number of areas of

coverage identified by each organization), assure their specialized training and facilitate the rapid deployment and integration of such teams, including the building of linkages with local non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations in the receiving countries. To the extent possible, national participating organizations would identify and pre-position equipment and material necessary for effective operations once fielded. The Department and UNV would create teams from the groups of nationals from the participating countries. In this regard, care would also need to be taken to avoid imbalance between countries providing volunteers.

36. UNV and the Department would aim to develop an information-sharing system that would assure the effective management of the decentralized model.

37. The goal would be to have an arrangement whereby the United Nations system, through appropriate collaboration between the Department and UNV, could call on the national participants to provide teams, groups or individuals with the relevant expertise, without further screening and using streamlined administrative procedures.

F. Training programmes for "White Helmets"

38. Recognizing that experience in a particular field, alone, is not always sufficient to enable a skilled professional to be successfully fielded and to function within the context of United Nations operations, UNV would seek, subject to the availability of resources, to develop and present various orientation and training programmes, including, as appropriate, utilizing existing modules such as the Disaster Management Training Programme, tailored for the specific needs of the WH volunteers. Accordingly, a series of training programmes, with the following components, could be envisaged:

(a) The basic training programme could include elements relating to substantive aspects of the assignments, including:

(i) Structure of the United Nations system;

(ii) Disaster Management Training Programme background and objectives;

(iii) Disaster assessment/vulnerability and risk assessment;

(iv) Displaced persons in civil conflict;

(v) Information management and communications;

(vi) International humanitarian law;

(vii) Stress management;

(viii) Participatory approaches;

(ix) Administrative issues, including logistics, communications and reporting procedures;

(b) Other training programmes, organized and conducted on a mission-by-mission basis as required by the prevailing circumstances, could consist of aspects relating to the country of assignment, including:

(i) Language training;

(ii) In-country conditions;

(iii) Cultural sensitization;

(c) Training programmes could also be developed that focus on personal security matters, addressing the following:

(i) Attitudinal and behavioral factors;

(ii) Communications procedures;

(iii) First aid procedures;

(iv) Local political conditions, local reaction to the United Nations, special sensitivities, as well as public conduct.

39. The investment in training should provide benefits in terms of better understanding and quicker integration of WH volunteers into new missions, while reducing risks of maladjustment. Existing training programmes could be updated and expanded in consultation with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and operational agencies to ensure adequate training resources and facilities according to anticipated needs. As the WH initiative matures with field experience, training responsibilities could be transferred to the field level.

G. Status and security of "White Helmets"

40. Volunteers selected to participate in WH activities would be contracted by, and would serve under conditions of service applicable to the assignment and other rules and regulations of, UNV (including the Code of Conduct and applicable United Nations security guidelines and procedures).

41. In the performance of their duties, volunteers would follow the overall administrative rules and procedures of United Nations structure in the country of assignment. UNV, through its in-country UNV Programme Officer, Programme Administration and Support Unit, or similar structures, would assure the proper and effective field administration and management of WH volunteers within the overall system of adminstration and management of UNV.

42. Substantive technical backstopping, including in-work planning and implementation, would be provided by the United Nations organizations concerned or recipient national institutions to which WH volunteers would be assigned.

V. CONCLUSIONS

43. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 49/139 B, in the light of the growing demands for manpower and funds to mitigate the suffering and destruction caused by numerous emergencies, represents an innovative opportunity for the effective, efficient and economical provision of assistance to the intended beneficiaries of the United Nations system's operations, tapping existing but as yet unstructured and therefore unrealized sources of volunteer expertise. More than merely providing a new human resource base, the WH initiative presents a new opportunity for creative and resourceful programme design, formulation and implementation.

44. The WH initiative, however, can become viable only if and when Governments set up or encourage the creation of national volunteer corps and provide the necessary financial resources for their operation. Once nominations of such volunteer teams are finalized, UNV would store such information in a central database, and update it, as necessary, along the lines of its practice in dealing with individual volunteers.

45. Once several volunteer teams have served successfully under United Nations auspices, experiences gained would help identify the lacunae in the evolving volunteer service scheme. This experience would also allow for the review of various aspects of the arrangement, such as coordinated preparedness, planning, continuing government support and advocacy, and ways and means to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the deployment of WH volunteers.

46. Governments are invited to provide the necessary financial support and take the necessary measures to set up national volunteer teams in order to achieve the objectives of the WH initiative.

Notes

1/ For example, in Cambodia, close to 800 district electoral supervisors, camp officers, engineers and mechanics were provided for UNTAC; in Mozambique, nearly 100 camp and operations officers and 150 electoral support officers served; in South Africa, 205 UNV specialists supported UNOMSA; more than 100 volunteers served during the course of UNOSOM; and more than 70 volunteers are serving under recruitment in MINUGUA, UNAMIR, UNMIH and UNAVEM. In Afghanistan, Burundi, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Malawi and the former Yugoslavia, volunteers are serving as protection officers, logisticians, food-aid monitors and civics educators, conflict prevention and resolution specialists, medical services personnel, relief coordinators, construction managers and engineers, urban planners and architects, air traffic controllers, fleet maintenance specialists, radio and telecommunications specialists, disaster-preparedness planners and social services specialists.